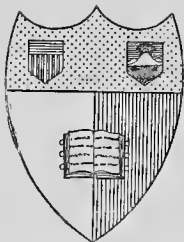


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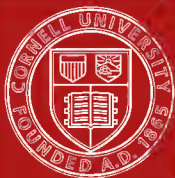
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NOTES ON IRELAND

MADE FROM

*PERSONAL OBSERVATION OF
ITS POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMICAL
CONDITION*

BY

J. BAKER GREENE, LL.B.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH

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INTRODUCTION.

AMIDST the smoke of the political battlefield it is very difficult to see what is really going on in Ireland. Statements the most contradictory come from sources apparently the most authentic. The account given by an ex-Chief Secretary of the number and character of the evictions is met by a positive denial on the part of persons who ought to be almost equally well informed. The same is the case with regard to the ability of the farmers to pay their rents, the prevalence of terrorism, the extent of the popular desire for an Irish Parliament, and every subject connected with the condition and disposition of the people. The report of a competent, careful, and dispassionate observer, after investigations conducted on the spot, is therefore of the

greatest value. That character seemed to me to belong in an eminent degree to Mr. Baker Greene's "Notes on Ireland" when they appeared in the *Morning Post*, and I was probably not alone in expressing the desire that they should be reprinted. By all who are interested in the Irish question they will, I feel sure, be found instructive.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

Sept. 11, 1886.

NOTES ON IRELAND.

I.

DUBLIN.

IT is just eight months ago, I was over here "electioneering." A general election was on the point of taking place, and the newly formed Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union was busily engaged in preparing to try conclusions with the so-called Nationalist party at the polls. The immense increase made to the electorate by Mr. Gladstone's Representation of the People Act had given to Mr. Parnell an opportunity of sending to the House of Commons an infinitely stronger Irish party than had ever been seen within its walls since the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland was effected in the last year of the last century; and the leader of the Nationalists was jubilant over what he rightly regarded as his assured success. A National Convention had by judicious manipulation been made the instrument of dictating to the constituencies the particular patriots they should select as "fit and proper persons" to represent them in Parliament, whilst funds supplied from the other side of the Atlantic enabled the said patriots to fulfil

the prosaic but still costly obligations imposed by returning officers on aspirants for parliamentary honours. But although there was but little doubt of what would be the results at the polls, the new association for maintaining the Union between Great Britain and Ireland decided on pursuing to some extent the tactics of their opponents, by supplying a fair amount of powder and shot to enable their champions to fight hopeless battles, the object being to ascertain, if possible, the relative numbers of those who desired to throw the Government of Ireland into the hands of men avowedly hostile to British rule, and those who were not only content to abide by, but who were anxious to entrust their interests to, an Imperial Parliament. In the three provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught the Unionist representatives were without exception beaten, and very badly beaten, at the polls, and those who put them into the field had not even the poor satisfaction of ascertaining approximately the respective numbers of their friends and their foes. The careful organization of the National League, the terrorism which it inspired, and the vigilance of the Roman Catholic clergy at the polling-booths, rendered it practically impossible for weak-kneed electors to register their votes against the nominees of the Convention; whilst it must also be admitted that the Loyalists, as they were then termed, either through demoralization, inspired by the certainty of impending defeat or an inability to realize the imminence of the peril which threatened them, did not exert themselves as they ought to have done.

Now, another general election has taken place, and

the relative numbers of the Unionist and the Nationalist representatives are absolutely unchanged, but so far as regards the condition of this country and the temper of its inhabitants a very marked alteration has taken place. A good many things have happened since last November, and it is impossible to be in the Irish capital for even a day or two without observing that large numbers of those who last autumn regarded Home Rule in any form as chimerical and mischievous, now treat it as not only within the range of practical politics, but as not possible to be excluded from it. I do not say that Unionists have been converted into Nationalists, or that they have become blind to the perils which would attend the establishment of an Irish Parliament; but owing to a variety of causes, to which I shall presently refer, they have arrived at the conclusion that some large, though by them undefined, measure of Home Rule has now become indispensable to rescue Ireland from the slough of despond into which she has sunk. There are, of course, large numbers who are as strenuously opposed to concessions of any kind as they were last year. I am simply referring to the change of opinion which has taken place with many whom I met last November, and to the views which within the past few days I have heard expressed by commercial men in this city. The primary ground of this change is unquestionably the course pursued by the late Prime Minister in inviting the Imperial Legislature to practically repeal the Act of Union, thereby creating a widespread impression in Ireland that it would be repealed. It is argued, and with great plausibility, even by those who are still Unionists at heart, that if so great a change was

proposed and endorsed by 313 members of the House of Commons, some smaller change recommends itself to the majority of 343 members, and therefore that the sooner such change is effected the better. But they are principally impelled to this conclusion by the absolute stagnation of trade and enterprise in the country, which makes itself felt no less severely in the metropolis than in the provinces. The utter impossibility of protracting this existing condition of things, without entailing the absolute ruin of many who now only just keep their heads above water, has convinced the sufferers that something must be done. "It is the uncertainty which is killing us," was the remark made to me to-day by one of the leading tradesmen in Dublin. No one knows what is going to happen, and in this state of insecurity capital is taken out of the country, whilst not a single sixpence comes into it.

If the general condition of things in the commercial and financial world here is compared with what it was six weeks ago, there is an undoubted improvement. The rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill gave a decided fillip to the value of all securities. This was, of course, to be expected, but the significance of the reaction should not be exaggerated. There is comparatively little gambling on the Exchange here, and the alterations in the value of securities is not to be explained by the haste of "bears" to close their accounts. But, although there has been a very sensible rise in prices, there is a very material falling off, as compared with those of last year. Let us take, for example, the stock of the Bank of Ireland, which last autumn stood at £330, which fell after the introduction of Mr.

Gladstone's Bill to £250, and has now made a recovery to £265. The depreciation still continues enormous, and the same remark applies to the debenture stock of the principal Irish railways. The cause of the depreciation I have ascertained to be the unwillingness of people—not excluding zealous Nationalists—to keep their money in Irish securities when they can convert them, as is mostly the case, into American investments. As regards the Bank of Ireland, it is notorious that the Nationalist leaders regard that institution with feelings of great hostility, and it is apprehended, not without reason, that any government similar to that which Mr. Gladstone proposed to establish in this country would transfer the Government accounts to other banks. It is also considered extremely probable that the Irish Government, if established, would impose a heavy tax on railway stock, and this naturally accounts for the heavy fall which took place in that class of securities. In a word, Mr. Gladstone's scheme threatened such widespread mischief that investments of all kinds came tumbling down, whilst its rejection has gone but a very little way indeed towards restoring the public confidence. The volcano has for the moment ceased to threaten the surrounding country, but the terrified inhabitants, though they have recovered a little of their courage, are evidently apprehensive that it will burst forth again.

II.

DUBLIN.

THE condition of the metropolis of a State may be expected to not inadequately represent the condition of the country itself, and if the soundness of this test be accepted, it certainly would not be necessary to make a journey in the provinces in order to be convinced that things are very far from flourishing in Ireland just now. Dublin, according to my ideas, has never been remarkable for its liveliness; it has always, since the time of my youth, presented the appearance of having seen better days. The evidences of decayed grandeur, and of even respectable mediocrity, in many of its buildings having sunk to squalor and filth, have been always too striking, and it will probably be admitted by its inhabitants that it has not been undeserving of the title which, with a grim humour and "alliteration's artful aid," they themselves have given it of "dear dirty Dublin." But although the imposing residences of the Irish nobility before the Union have long since passed into other hands, and shops have supplanted private houses, there has until recently been nothing to lead the passing visitor to conclude that Dublin was not a thriving, if not absolutely an opulent city. But I am bound to confess that even within the past year I have noticed a considerable change for the worse, and the result of the inquiries I have made from men well entitled to speak with authority convinces me that the impressions made upon me as I strolled

through the streets have been only too well founded. When in leading business thoroughfares in such a city as this, numerous houses with their shops are seen closed, and apparently closed for some time, from an apparent unwillingness or inability on the part of tenants with the needful capital to occupy them, it is not necessary to go much further for proofs of very considerable commercial depression. Trade is stagnant, and the consequences of that stagnancy present themselves upon all sides. Supply and demand counterbalance each other, and as the demand has fallen off through the disappearance of those from whom it proceeded, those who maintain their living by supply must necessarily suffer.

I was speaking to-day to a gentleman who, although not in all respects similar to "the Universal Provider" of Westburnia, has opened various and different places of business in Dublin. He had just returned from a commercial visit to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and he told me that when he saw how thriving business was in these Scotch cities, he could not help telling his friends there that they should come to Dublin if they wanted to form a correct estimate of the Gladstonian policy which they so zealously supported at the late elections. According to this gentleman's opinion, there would be nothing left for the great mass of those who have embarked in trade in Dublin but to dispose of their property upon any terms they could get, if power was transferred to the Nationalists. He directed my attention to the large number of places of business which were closed, and were likely to remain empty some time, owing to the sense of insecurity created by the late Prime Minister's policy, and he gave

me some statistics illustrative of the fall in the value of house property in Dublin which were perfectly startling. Houses on lease which commanded considerable premiums two or three years ago can now with difficulty secure tenants at the mere rent ; and, speaking generally, he declared that he had no hesitation in saying that the value of house property in Dublin had fallen recently to the extent of 50 per cent. He further instanced a number of matters connected with the trade in which he was personally concerned, to show the extent to which it had fallen off within the past twelve months. For example, he supplied several hotels in Dublin and its suburbs with bread, but as the number of consumers has been considerably diminished, some of the hotels have been almost empty.

On all sides I hear the same story with doleful reiteration. Professional men make the same complaint as tradesmen. In the hall of the Four Courts never has there been so little work to be done, and even medical men would seem to suggest that the people have so little of the circulating medium at their disposal that they cannot afford to get ill, or if they do so, they are obliged to trust to the cheaper and, as the cynical might suggest, the more efficacious merits of the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. Merrion Square has long been the chosen abode of the more distinguished of the Dublin physicians and surgeons, and the houses there used to be snapped up at a large premium whenever any became vacant. There are, however, now, and have been for the past two years, several which await tenants, although the terms which the owners are willing to accept have been considerably reduced. A physician to whom I was speaking to-day

told me that he had given £2500 premium for a very long lease of his house only a few years ago, and he felt confident that it would not now fetch £1000; and he mentioned the case of a former neighbour in the Square who had paid £2500 premium, and laid out £1000 in improvements, and the lease had since been sold for £1200. Having abundant opportunities of seeing all classes of the community, he declared that in his experience never was poverty more general, or the prospects of still greater poverty more assured.

The Dublin carmen have always had a reputation for their shrewdness, and happening to hit upon a fair specimen of his class, and a member of what Mr. Gladstone calls the masses—and in this instance the Irish masses might be presumed to be particularly desirous of justice being done to Ireland—I asked him what he thought of the present state of things, and of the means by which the late Prime Minister sought to remedy it. As regards the former it was the old story. He required to make at least 8s. a day to keep himself, his horse, and possibly a family, and some days he did not earn more than 5s. I inquired the cause of the bad times. “Well, you see,” said he, “that the landlords and those who have the money to spend don’t come to Dublin. There is not the same demand for ‘vayhicles’; and as for a tenant farmer, why, if he takes one, he pays the smallest possible fare, 6*d.*, and it may be five minutes before he fishes that out of a bag, which is tied round with no end of string.” “Then,” said I, “you don’t think it would be a good thing to buy out the landlords and convert the tenant farmers into owners?” “Sure, it would be the ruin of the country,” he replied; “they would

not have any money to spend, the rent would all be paid to the Government, and even if they had any money they would keep it much closer than the 'quality.' I did not venture to ask him for an alternative policy, but it was quite evident that he was utterly disgusted with the latest form in which it has been suggested that justice should be done to Ireland.

I cannot say that any extraordinary interest is taken by either Unionists or Nationalists in the constitution of the new Ministry. Ireland has been so often made the shuttlecock of party warfare in England, that the feeling of distrust is not disarmed by the accession of a Tory Administration. The fact that Lord Salisbury does not contemplate taking any decisive step before February is accepted as a proof that his bark is worse than his bite, and that "the twenty years of coercion" will not in any case be commenced for another half-year. On the subject of coercion, I must say that, so far as I have had an opportunity of judging, it would be regarded with disfavour by nearly every one. I am now speaking of legislation specially directed against the Irish, and from whose operation the English and the Scotch would be excluded. There is a pretty general belief that if the ordinary law were vigorously upheld and administered, there would be no necessity for exceptional legislation, and I may add that it is denied that the ordinary law has been made the most of since the expiration of the Crimes Act, a twelve-month since. Of the manner in which rent is paid I shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent letter; but a very unmistakable intimation was thrown out at a meeting of the National League a few days since,

that a coercive policy would be followed by a complete suspension of payment of rent. There is, however, an offence for which the ordinary law makes no provision—namely, “boycotting,” and in respect to it there is a very general consensus of opinion that if any Government would devise a mode by which this practice could be suppressed, it would be entitled to the gratitude of ninety-nine hundredths of the Irish people.

III.

CORK.

WHATEVER may be the social or political condition of Ireland just now, it is impossible to make the journey from the capital to this south-west corner of the island without being struck by the beauty of the country, its surpassing verdure, and the evidence it presents on all sides of that amazing fertility for which it has always been famed. So far as Nature is concerned, her bounty is apparently inexhaustible, and one cannot help marvelling at the incomprehensible perversity by which human ingenuity has managed for so many centuries to turn such lavish gifts to so little account. Perhaps it is the English, perhaps it is the Irish themselves, and perhaps it is the principles of political economy, which have rendered Nature powerless to give effect to her good intentions; but the fact is incontestable, that Ireland as an agricultural and a grazing country is not as fruitful as it might be. I saw but few corn-fields on my way down, but that did not surprise me, for it has long become impossible in Ireland—or for that matter, in England—to make money in that direction. But I was astonished at seeing considerable tracts neither converted into meadow nor used for grazing purposes. Of sheep I saw only a few very scanty flocks, and the herds of cattle were very small and singularly disproportioned to the extent of the fields in which they were turned out. Of course all this land commands

a good rent, and it is utilized in some form or another, but it certainly was not made as much of as if it had been transplanted to the English shires.

Cork was looking its best on Saturday, for it was market-day, and the principal streets were thronged. Contrasted with Dublin, it was much more cheerful and lively; there were more signs of business about, and, taking them altogether, the people had a satisfied and contented appearance. My inquiries, however, led me to conclude that this was more superficial than real, that the condition of trade is rotten; and some very heavy failures within the past few weeks, not to mention the recent collapse of the Munster Bank, led to confirm that conclusion. The principal trade in the county of Cork is in butter, and it is in connection with that commodity, and the price it commands in the market, that the payment or non-payment of rent virtually depends. Before leaving Dublin I spoke to one or two of the principal agents for the collection of rents in various parts of Ireland, and I was agreeably surprised to hear that on the whole, and putting out of account exceptionally lawless districts, rents are fairly well paid. But in order to secure the payment it is a condition precedent that an abatement of about 15 per cent. should be made in the judicial rents which were imposed by virtue of the Land Act of 1881. It may be said that the demand for this abatement is unjust, and so it is on the assumption that the judicial rents which were "fair" five years ago are "fair" now; but I am bound to say that in the opinion of men who, if anything, are biassed in favour of the landlords, it is much more difficult for the tenant farmers to pay the fair

rents now than it was when they were imposed by the Land Courts. All property has depreciated during the past five years, owing to causes into which it is unnecessary here to enter, and the farmers have suffered in common with the rest. So far as I can gather, the demand for 15 per cent. abatement is considered not unreasonable, and when it is complied with the rent is paid. But there are many cases, especially in the ranks of the smaller landlords, where the charges they have to meet are proportionally so large that they cannot consent to this abatement without seriously trenching on the small margin on which they have to live, and it is in these instances that those unhappy conflicts arise between the landlords and tenants which culminate in writs, evictions, and derelict farms as the result of boycotting. In some of these cases the owner takes his stand upon his strict rights, irrespective of his pecuniary necessities; in others he is as much to be pitied as the tenant, because he cannot consent to a ruinous diminution of his already slender income, but in both the result is the same—namely, to still further intensify the ill-feeling subsisting between the landlord and tenant classes.

In this county, as I have already remarked, the production of butter is the chief agricultural industry, and butter has fallen to fivepence and sixpence a pound. The superior qualities of butter still command a good price, but the ordinary butter brought to market by the greater number of the farmers has fallen to this low figure. This is due to the simple fact that they do not possess or cannot supply them-

selves with the most modern appliances for producing butter, and that in adopting primitive methods the commodity they turn out is of a very inferior character. Although the product is really butter and is not adulterated, it is not so attractive to the purchasers as those singular compounds which, with the aid of oleomargarine, are now sent into the market. A very considerable amount of the butter produced in the counties of Cork and Limerick is of inferior quality, and it necessarily fetches the low price I have mentioned. But with the commodity at this price, it is confessedly impossible for the farmers to pay the rents which they paid only a few years ago, when it commanded tenpence or a shilling a pound, and consequently even a much larger share of indulgence than the mere remission of 15 per cent. has been extended to them by landlords in a position to do so.

There are still other causes which operate adversely to the farmers in this county, though of an entirely different kind. Some years since the pernicious habit arose on the part of the banks and the butter merchants of making advances against the butter to be subsequently supplied, and this had the necessary effect of making the farmers anticipate their income and live in a chronic condition of indebtedness. I believe this practice is peculiar to Munster; it is certainly unknown in Ulster. During the past twelve-month, however, the fall of the Munster Bank, and the increasing depreciation in the value of property, have caused a discontinuance of the system. Neither the banks nor the butter merchants will continue to make the advances, and the farmers are unable to meet the

accruing rent. It was only last week, as I was credibly informed, that three farmers pledged their butter for the remainder of the year for the money which was necessary to pay the gale of rent already due, and thereby save themselves from the risk of eviction, with the consequent loss of all the rights incidental to their tenancy.

IV.

BANTRY.

IN my last letter I directed attention to some special causes which affected the tenant farmers in this region of Ireland, and particularly as regards the butter industry. With butter at half the price it commanded five or six years ago, and in presence of the hopelessness of competing in the English meat markets, the farmers are unquestionably placed in a position which entitles them to considerable indulgence. I am now, of course, dealing simply with matters admitted upon all sides, and placing out of account for the present the uses made by political agitators and National League leaders of the existing depression. But it is necessary to go deeper still in order to explain a condition of things which, irrespective of that depression, is to many incomprehensible. I mean the antagonism which exists between the landlord and tenant classes, and which has made the very name of landlord a term of opprobrium. The owners and the occupiers are both sufferers, but the popular sympathy is all on one side.

When the Encumbered Estates Act was passed, several years ago, it was expected that the then existing land difficulty would be solved by clearing off the encumbrances, and creating a new race of landlords, with parliamentary titles and every inducement to expend capital. The result, however, was far different from what was anticipated. The law of landlord and

tenant had then been unaffected; the power of the former remained as complete as it was in feudal times, and as soon as the Encumbered Estates Court opened its doors a crowd of speculative purchasers came forward, many of whom had made their money in commercial pursuits—shopkeepers, &c., who knew nothing and cared less about tenant farming—and they bought at as low as seven and ten years' purchase the land that was thrown into the market. At that time, as now, the greater portion of the land was held by yearly tenancy, and the first act of the new purchaser was to make a considerable addition to the rents of his tenants, with the alternative of eviction. The tenants had substantially no alternative but to comply with the demands of their new landlords, and they assented to the terms, though knowing that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to comply with them. The increased rental thus obtained, and enforced in most cases with unscrupulous rigour, necessarily gave a much higher marketable value to the newly acquired properties than they had when purchased under the sanction of the Court, and the new landlords, if they held on, splendidly recouped themselves by the increased rents, whilst if they re-sold they did so on the terms of a most profitable speculation. In a word, the Encumbered Estates Act, though conceived with the best intentions and apparently followed by the most satisfactory results, did in effect devote a considerable portion of Ireland to the operation of the most unscrupulous jobbery.

It is therefore not difficult to understand how landlordism has become in this country odious to an extent which in England is incomprehensible, although

in the latter the position of the tenant is by no means so good as it is at present in Ireland. The Land Acts of 1870 and 1881 were passed with the view of correcting the evils to which I have drawn attention, but they have only done so in part, and at best in a very unsatisfactory way. I might cite a number of illustrations in support of the complaints I have heard so frequently expressed on all sides, of the rapacity of many of the new landlords, but one will serve the purpose. I met on Sunday a Roman Catholic clergyman on board the steamer going down the river from Cork to Queenstown, and he told me the following story of his own family :—His father was a tenant farmer, with a holding of about 100 acres, near Cork. When he first entered into possession he paid 9s. an acre, but having improved it considerably, the landlord recognized the increased value of the property by raising the rent to 16s. This he paid for some years, and the property, which then belonged to an Irish peer, was sold by order of the Landed Estates Court, and was purchased by another Irish peer. The first act of the purchaser was to raise the rent on the estate all round, and to this particular tenant he gave the option of giving up his farm or accepting a lease at the increased rent of 25s. an acre. He accepted the latter alternative, though he felt that the struggle would be hopeless. For four years he paid the increased rent, and then, being unable to meet a half-year's rent, then six months overdue, he was evicted, and the farm, with the improvements which he had made, passed into the landlord's hands. He emigrated to Australia, where he died. Four of his sons were equally obliged to quit the country, and have swelled

the ranks of the enemies of England ; and the fifth—the clergyman to whom I refer—alone remains in Ireland, and is certainly actuated by no kindly feelings to the Imperial Legislature which permitted so cruel a wrong to be done.

This is to a great extent ancient history, and as the Act of 1881 has completely revolutionized the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, it may seem irrelevant to deal with matters whose recurrence has become impossible. But it is indispensable to keep the pre-existing state of things in mind, in order not only to understand the feelings with which “landlordism” in the abstract is regarded, and the uses to which they have been turned by those who lead the crusade against the owners of property, but also to measure the practicability of schemes for buying out the landlords, and the conversion of the occupiers into owners. Now, so far as I have had an opportunity of forming an opinion in this county, the tenants are prepared to meet the landlords, provided that the latter will recognize their inability to keep their engagements in full, and those who, as I pointed out in a previous letter, are willing or able to do so receive their rents with an abatement of 15 to 20 per cent. But there are some whose properties are largely encumbered, the rent-roll is considerably shorn of its fair proportions by the first charges to mortgagees, amongst whom, I may remark, some English and Scotch insurance companies hold a prominent place, and practically they have no control whatever over their estates. In these and similar cases the drastic operation of the Landed Estates Court would necessarily seem applicable, but unfortunately we are met by the very formidable and

at present insurmountable obstacle, that the freehold of land in Ireland is now practically unsaleable. The right of occupancy is, as I will have occasion to show in a subsequent letter, very valuable indeed, whilst the fee-simple is, for marketable purposes, substantially worthless. This is a very remarkable—indeed, I may say, an astounding—fact, but it is one which is established every day by the prices which tenancies fetch when sold either by auction or by private contract, and by the total inability of owners or their representatives to sell their property upon any terms that sane men would accept or that the Court would authorize. It is therefore impossible to do anything just now with encumbered estates in the way of sale, and if the rent which the tenants are willing to pay, and beyond which they are unable in the present depression to go, is sufficient to give the landlords a surplus after meeting the charges, so much the worse for the latter. It will no doubt be said that the landlord can enforce his rights by legal process, and that is so. When this is done, the full rent is obtained in those cases when the tenant either has a fund on which he can draw, or is enabled to obtain the assistance of friends. He has the very strongest motives for meeting his engagements, because his right of occupancy, or tenant right as it may be termed, is, as I have remarked, very valuable indeed, and no sacrifice can be too great to preserve it from forfeiture. In the event of eviction, however, this right perishes, and consequently in those cases in which this extreme measure is resorted to by the landlord, or the receiver, or the agent, and when the tenant is unable to pay the rent which is due, he loses not merely his holding, but the marketable value

at which that holding could be voluntarily transferred by him to somebody else. But if eviction presses hard upon the tenant, it presses no less hardly upon the landlord, who considers himself compelled to enforce his rights. Under the system of boycotting, to which on a subsequent occasion I must refer in detail, a farm from which a tenant has been evicted cannot be let to any one else. Such farms become absolutely derelict, and as valueless as if they were in the midst of the Great Sahara. There are half a dozen farms, some exceeding 100 acres, in the neighbourhood of the city of Cork, which are in this condition. No one is permitted to occupy or to utilize them in any way. If any one is bold enough to make the attempt, he is mercilessly boycotted, if not made the victim of still more serious outrage. It will be seen, therefore, that the legal rights which the law confers upon the landlord are divested of their practical value by the novel system which has come into existence within the past few years, and is known by the name of its first victim. In one case of a boycotted farm to which my attention was called, and the facts connected with which were attested by a gentleman in a high official position, the landlord was certainly not entitled to much sympathy. The rent and costs recovered against the tenant amounted to £110. Proceedings were then taken for eviction, and £84 was tendered by the tenant, with a promise of a further sum of £4 the same evening, but refused by the landlord's agent. The tenant was thereupon evicted, but the farm has since remained derelict.

V.

KENMARE.

THERE are few pleasanter drives on the west coast than that between Bantry and Kenmare, provided the weather be fine, and this very necessary condition I was fortunate enough to secure. The Bay of Bantry is one of the finest roadsteads on this much-indented coast. It stretches more than thirty miles to the headlands which mark the entrance, and appears to be a favoured resort of the Channel Fleet, a portion of which is at present there. I need not dilate on the scenery, which in beauty is absolutely unrivalled, especially at Glengariff; but I was specially struck by the extraordinary luxuriance of all species of vegetation, the countless varieties of ferns, and the hedgerows of fuchsia, now coming into full bloom. At this time of year tourists are tolerably plentiful in the south-west, but this season they are limited in number, and are almost exclusively American, the English element being entirely absent. Many are the questions which have been addressed to me to explain this unusual phenomenon, and I have been compelled, with some hesitation and timidity, to suggest that the impression is general in England, that Ireland is in a somewhat unsettled condition, and that outrages of the most serious kind are of somewhat frequent occurrence. This objection is met by the time-honoured accusation that the English newspapers are notorious for their untruthfulness and exaggeration in respect to everything reflecting on

the law-abiding and peaceful character of the Irish people; and secondly, that whatever may be the differences which arise between the natives, they in no way affect the security or the comfort of strangers. The latter is strictly true, and I have no hesitation in saying that if the absence of English visitors from Ireland this season is due to personal apprehensions, they are entirely unfounded, for I am perfectly certain that a stranger would be infinitely safer in the loneliest glen in Kerry than on the Thames Embankment after nightfall. But there are other causes also at work to check the usual immigration of tourists from the other side of St. George's Channel. The late general election, the reassembling of Parliament in the present month, and the almost universal depression, have had a great deal to do with upsetting many holiday arrangements. Still, however, if there be any individuals who are still hesitating about the direction in which they will bend their steps, I do not think they could do better than pay a visit to a country which has recently engaged so much of their attention, and is likely to continue to do so for some time to come.

Speaking for myself, I must say that, after the experience of the last few months in England, it is a great relief to visit a region where nothing is heard about Home Rule. The Dublin people are full of it, for reasons that are very intelligible; but since I left that city, five days ago, I can conscientiously say that, with one exception, no person whom I have met has alluded to the subject directly or indirectly, or seemed to give it a moment's consideration. That exception was an old acquaintance, a member of the Munster

Circuit, with whom I spent an evening at the Cork City Club, and he declared his conviction that, unless "the inextinguishable spirit of Irish nationality" was duly recognized by the British Government, and something done towards conferring legislative independence on the Irish people, all remedial legislation, however excellent in itself, or however comprehensive, would fail to put an end to disaffection and disloyalty. My learned friend, it will be seen, is a pronounced Nationalist, and he disregarded as chimerical the apprehensions that, if Ireland obtained a Parliament, the majority would abuse their power to the prejudice of the minority. With respect to the scheme for the expropriation of landlords, he contended that if the tenant occupiers were converted into owners they would become Conservative by the nature of the stake they would have in the country, and that although at first the existing "Nationalist" element would be strong in the new Parliament, it would speedily be eliminated by the numerous Conservative landowners, who would take the places of the equally Conservative though numerically insignificant landlords, who would be got rid of. Without questioning my friend's sincerity, I could not, however, help feeling that he did not treat the question very dispassionately or regard it in all its bearings. But outside the metropolis, with its special interests, it does not appear to me that Home Rule has any attraction for the masses except as a means to the attainment of certain specific ends. It is the land question in all its bearings, including possibly the means of enabling the native producers to compete on more favourable terms with foreigners, which engrosses their attention; and

if that could be settled satisfactorily, and they could discover a way of making both ends meet, or possibly overlap, they would not trouble themselves whether their laws were made at Westminster or in College Green. They are Home Rulers now because they despair of obtaining relief from a British Government and a British Legislature; and with their own Parliament they think, and perhaps not incorrectly, that they could do what they liked, and what they would wish to do would be to get rid of the landlords and revive a policy of protection. It has frequently and conclusively been objected by those who are in favour of virtually repealing the Act of Union, that there is nothing that an Irish Parliament could do which could not equally be done by the Imperial Parliament. This is indisputable, and it seems to me that, as a separatist policy has been unequivocally condemned by the constituencies at the late elections, the vital question for the new Government to determine will be the lengths to which they will go in the same direction as an Irish Parliament would infallibly proceed if it were established under the existing condition of things. A large extension of local self-government, short of the creation of a Legislature, has, I know, a great attraction for many English politicians, and it would unquestionably be followed by beneficial results. But unless accompanied by some very comprehensive legislation on the land question, it would be regarded in Ireland almost universally as a mockery. The recognition of this fact may prevent the commission of some fatal blunders. Even under the most favourable circumstances no extension of what is termed local self-government

would meet the aspirations of "Irish Nationality."

I alluded in my last letter to the extraordinary and I believe hitherto unprecedented fact, that in this country the right of occupying land is very much more valuable than the right of ownership, or, to put it in other words, that the privilege of paying rent for land with the occupancy commands a higher price in the market than the right of demanding that rent in consideration of parting with such occupancy. I was at the trouble of collecting some statistics to satisfy myself that this was really the fact, and amongst many I subjoin the following as fairly illustrative of all. In the neighbourhood of Roscrea, in the county of Tipperary, the following sales were recently made by tenants of their interest to others willing to take their places:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Yearly tenancy, rent . .	6	5	0	sold for	85	0	0
„ „ . .	5	5	0	„	87	0	0
„ „ . .	5	12	0	„	77	0	0
„ „ . .	6	0	0	„	85	0	0
Judicial lease for 15 years	33	0	0	„	362	0	0
„ „	12	0	0	„	111	0	0

In the county of Leitrim the following sales recently were effected in consideration of the transfer from tenant to tenant, the tenancies being from year to year:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Rent . . .	18	0	0	sold for	246	0	0
„ . . .	16	2	6	„	250	0	0
„ . . .	7	5	9	„	125	0	0
„ . . .	1	0	0	„	32	10	0

These are not exceptional rates, but furnish fair

samples of what is taking place in all the four provinces of Ireland, and they bring us face to face with the very curious fact, that whilst tenants are admittedly unable to pay their rent in full, they are prepared to give 12, 15, and in one of the above cases 32 years' purchase in order to acquire the obligation to pay it. The cynical will perhaps suggest that they make these purchases because they do not intend to pay the rent, and regarded from this point of view the investments would seem tolerably sound. Such, however, is not the case. The right of occupancy in land in Ireland is just now looked upon as carrying with it a not unreasonable expectation of acquiring the fee-simple for nothing at no distant date, and this little fact is worthy of the consideration of those who entertain schemes by which the Irish landlords would be bought out by their tenants upon fair terms. But for precisely the same reasons that tenant right under the Act of 1881 has acquired a value in some instances exceeding that of the fee-simple a few years since, the latter has diminished in value, and has become practically unsaleable. The landlord cannot command for the fee anything approaching the price which his tenant can easily secure by transferring his right of occupation to somebody else. I am of course putting out of account sales by landlords to tenants under the Land Purchase Act of 1885.

VI.

TRALEE.

IN my previous letters I have directed attention to the depreciation in the value of property in Ireland, to the low prices which agricultural produce commands, and the necessary difficulties which the farmers encounter in fulfilling their engagements to the landlords; and, further, to the singular anomaly, that the rights of the tenant are more easily transferable by sale, and command a seemingly higher price in the market than those of the owner. I have now, however, to deal with a very different subject, which I have hitherto refrained from touching until I had the opportunity of obtaining the most exhaustive information from every available source. I refer to the organization which is now known by the name of the National League, to the jurisdiction which it wields, to the nature of its decrees, to the mode of their enforcement, and to the general effects which its existence and its authority produce upon the social condition of the entire community. The county of Kerry is perhaps an exceptionally favourable region for such inquiries as I have instituted, inasmuch as it has the invidious reputation of having been for some time past the most unsettled and the most lawless in Ireland; but it is only in degree that the condition of various counties where the National League has taken a firm hold may be said to differ, and what is true of one is true of all. With regard to the sources of my in-

formation, I may say that I have consulted gentlemen holding high magisterial positions, district inspectors in the Constabulary, land-owners and land-agents, and, though last, certainly not least, clergymen holding high rank in the Roman Catholic Church, and exercising their functions not merely within the limits of their respective parishes, but in much larger areas. On some points it is unnecessary to say that there have been certain diversities of opinion on the part of the various gentlemen who have favoured me with their views. Some have been inclined to adopt a more drastic treatment than others, but they all unanimously concurred in declaring that the disorganization and disintegration of society are proceeding at a fearful pace, and that unless something be done, and that very speedily, to put an end to the terrorism and the intimidation to which all classes, from the highest to the lowest, are exposed, universal bankruptcy must follow, whilst the demoralization of the people will become so complete that it will be scarcely possible to restore that respect for the law which furnishes the foundation of all civilized society. The edifice, or such as remains of it, is rapidly crumbling away, and that process will not cease without some active intervention.

The National League is now universally conceded to be the mere continuation of the original Land League, which was suppressed when Lord Cowper was Viceroy and Mr. Forster Chief Secretary. It is the same organization, but its title has been partly changed, and I find that over here people are unable to understand how it has come to pass that, although the original association was suppressed by a mere proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant, and although it was

then declared that its revival should not be tolerated under any other name, the present National League has been allowed to take its place. The Land League provoked extinction by its manifesto against the payment of rent, but the National League has vastly improved upon its predecessor by establishing a jurisdiction by which it controls the actions of all who come within the sphere of its influence. It holds through its innumerable branches, which have honey-combed three out of the four Irish provinces, courts which exercise a jurisdiction which its members do not venture for an instant to dispute. These courts are for the most part held on Sundays after Mass. The plaintiffs and defendants appear, the merits of the disputes are inquired into, and the cases are duly reported in such local journals as sympathize with the League. These cases arise chiefly out of the exercise of indubitably legal rights by the defendants, but which prejudices, or is alleged to prejudice, the plaintiffs, and in almost every instance the defendants are ordered to discontinue the enforcement of their rights, and for the most part they submit to the decree. I might furnish numerous illustrations did space permit, but I take one or two at random from a newspaper lying before me. A widow cited one Daly for having cut some turf on a bog alleged to be hers. It appears he had done so in previous years, but, as was alleged, with her generous permission, owing to his own bog being flooded. Daly had justified his action on the strength of what is stated to have been "some arrangements made with the landlord," and hence the widow's appeal. Daly appeared, and declared his willingness to abide by the decision of the court, and

he was thereupon directed to have nothing further to do with the place after removing the turf already cut, which the widow was graciously willing to permit. In another case the court passed a resolution that one Mooney, who was present, having declared that he made a mistake in attending an auction and buying a small portion of meadow, and that he was prepared to give it up, the thanks of the court were tendered to him for his manly action, and it was hoped that others "who made similar mistakes" would follow his good example. In another instance a resolution was passed, that, it having come to the notice of the court that "certain meadowing is looked after by certain parties, every honest National Leaguer is called upon to have nothing whatever to do with the said meadowing," owing to the harsh manner in which the owner treated his tenants "in these depressed times." These cases, with others, are reported in a single column of one newspaper. But there are cases of a different kind, in which the authority of the League is set at naught or is believed to be disregarded, and then the delinquent is denounced, and, in a great number of instances, some terrible outrage, of which he is the victim, follows the denunciation so speedily as to make the relation of cause and effect only too palpable. Several of these cases have been mentioned to me as having occurred in this county quite recently, and one of them was in its sequel so singular that I will refer to it. A portion of a bog having been reclaimed, a man named Conway proceeded to cut turf on it, this right being also claimed by others. His conduct was condemned by the local branch of the League, and he was denounced. Ten days afterwards his

house was entered at night; he was dragged forth and shot in the leg. He fortunately survived the injury. The organs of the League disavowed any connection between the denunciation and the outrage, and the crime was condemned in ingenuous and becoming language by the parish priest in his sermon on Sunday, August 1. After mass a meeting of the League Court was held under the presidency of the parish priest, at which Conway was present, and declared that he had no intention of disregarding its jurisdiction, and that in what he had done in cutting the turf he did not believe that he was giving the League or any of its members offence, whereupon a resolution was unanimously passed by the Court magnanimously "exculpating" the wounded man. I may remark that Conway, when first cited before the local branch of the League a month ago, refused to abandon his rights, denied the authority of the Court, and flung his ticket of membership indignantly on the table. A few days later a rifle bullet through the leg led him to view the matter in a different light; he made his submission, and was "exculpated."

Perhaps it will be suggested that he might have avoided this little unpleasantness if he had abstained from joining the National League. But such is the condition to which things have come that it requires no little courage to refuse to join that association. The leaders regard those who are not with them as being against them, and find adequate means of punishing them. And it is to this point I am particularly anxious of directing attention. The only real authority exercised, at least in the country districts, is that of the National League; it has virtually

superseded that of the Crown, and it is only conformable with human nature that those who can be made to feel its power should endeavour to secure its protection. The price they are compelled to pay is the complete abandonment of any legal rights the exercise of which is condemned by the League, but as they find by bitter experience that the legitimate Government of the country is unwilling or unable to protect them in the exercise of those rights, they are driven to make what bargain they can with their oppressors. It is a significant fact, and one which cannot be too strongly emphasized, that for a considerable time past the victims of the most diabolical outrages—those who have been murdered, those who have been maimed, those whose cattle have been houghed, and whose property has been maliciously destroyed—have been, with scarcely a solitary exception, tenant farmers and labourers, men who have dared either to rent or to take care of farms from which evictions have been made, or who have disobeyed the “resolutions” and the “recommendations” of the local branches of the League by buying property which the League has been pleased to decree should be unsaleable, or by dealing with or even consorting with those upon whom this association has pronounced a ban of social excommunication. The popular idea in England, that this is a war against landlords, and that they are the fitting victims of their own rapacity, is one of the greatest errors and delusions. The landlords suffer, as I shall have occasion to point out in my next letter, by the successful methods by which the League leaves them no alternative between accepting such terms as their tenants may be pleased to offer, and seeing their

farms, after eviction of the tenants, left derelict and abandoned. But the sufferings of those classes I have mentioned, and the shopkeepers in the country towns, are more various, more serious, and much more difficult of avoidance. They, as I shall have occasion to show, are made the daily victims of circumstances over which they can exercise absolutely no control. Boycotting is an offence the general nature of which has now become familiar to all, but until I made my present visit to Ireland I did not believe it possible that in a country presumably governed like other civilized States the commonest rights of citizenship could be so generally and so wantonly superseded by an association with which the so-called established Government is either unable or unwilling to interfere. With this, which is perhaps the strangest phase of social life in Ireland, I will deal in my next letter.

VII.

TRALEE.

IN my last communication I referred to the National League, its organization, and the machinery by which it exercises its jurisdiction, and I now propose to deal with one of the most formidable of the penalties which it is enabled to impose, and which in its effects is more far-reaching than I could possibly have supposed. Until comparatively recently the war against landlords, their agents, and other persons who have rendered themselves obnoxious, was conducted for the most part with the blunderbuss and the rifle; but without entirely abandoning the use of these valuable weapons, those who, whether rightly or wrongly, consider themselves aggrieved have devised a system of ostracism which, in respect to efficacy, is now brought to the highest degree of perfection, and possesses the exceptional merit of being practically universal in its application. The new government, which has virtually superseded that of the Queen in Ireland, has drawn up a code the observance of which is enforced with a certainty and a rigour which are notably wanting in the administration of the ordinary law. The offender, if not made the victim of more serious outrage, is denied the enjoyment of all the rights which make social existence possible, and, what is still more wonderful, the National League, by the terrorism which it inspires, secures the complete, though possibly the unwilling, co-operation of those

who are not affiliated to it, in giving effect to its decrees. Amongst the numerous offences of which it takes cognizance none is more serious or more severely punished than attempts to vindicate in a legal manner rights sanctioned or conferred by the ordinary law. The National League is specially jealous of the jurisdiction of the Queen's courts, and I am bound to say that it has now almost entirely superseded it. That a landlord who evicts a tenant who either cannot or will not pay his rent should be boycotted, and that all men should be prohibited from taking possession of this land under pain of being dealt with in a similar manner, is, after all, only a logical corollary from the allegation that rents are exorbitant and that tenants should not be turned out on the roadside because they cannot do impossibilities. But it is not easy to draw a sharp line of limitation when making a breach either in the Commandments or in the laws of the land, and an immunity from paying debts of one kind is strongly calculated to beget a desire to obtain immunity from paying any debts whatever. The shopkeepers are now in the same position as the landlords, and dare not enforce payment for the supply of goods by the ordinary process of law without incurring the risk of total ruin by a decree of the League forbidding persons to deal with them. "Were the shopkeepers to press for payment of debts due to them, there is scarcely a tenant whose stock or hay crops would escape the sheriff's hammer." Such is the language of one of the correspondents of *United Ireland* in referring to the condition of Tipperary, and whether the insolvency of the tenants be real or assumed, the results to the unfortunate shopkeepers

are the same. The law for the recovery of debts has for them been so long in abeyance that credit has been absolutely annihilated. Here in the south-west of Ireland all sales in the shops are for cash. No tenant farmer, however respectable, can obtain credit; whilst as for the banks, they do not now make even the most trifling advances.

If I were to attempt a definition of "boycotting" I am sure I could not improve upon one which appears on the title-page of a pamphlet recently published by the Cork Defence Union: "It means that a peaceable subject of the Queen is denied food and drink, and that he is ruined in his business; that his cattle are unsaleable at fairs; that the smith will not shoe his horse, nor the carpenter mend his cart; that old friends pass him by on the other side, making the sign of the cross; that his children are hooted at the village school; that he sits apart, like an outcast, in his usual place of public worship;—all for doing nothing but what the law says he has a perfect right to do." Now, since my arrival in this part of Ireland I have had abundant opportunities of verifying the accuracy of this definition. I have passed scores of farms which have become derelict because no man dare to take possession of them, or cultivate them, or use them for meadowing or for grazing purposes. I have travelled and walked the streets with men and women who night and day are under the special protection of the police, by the side of whose houses huts have been raised for the reception and accommodation of the little garrisons whose almost exclusive duty it is to protect those individuals from murder and outrage. On my way to this town I passed the house

occupied by the Curtin family, the members of which cannot to the present day pass through the streets or make their way to the adjoining chapel without being hooted by the village ruffians, even though accompanied by constabulary, and all because their father was murdered last November on his own doorstep in defending his house against a party of moonlighters, one of whom was shot dead. And here in this town I have seen a gentlewoman's car and horse standing in the street for hours because the hotel and stable keepers were too terrified to give accommodation, as the owner was under the ban of the League.

The lady in question lives some seven miles from Tralee, in a region so lonely that she described her house as being "four miles from anywhere." I had the good fortune of being introduced to her on the day of my arrival, as she happened to visit the town, and she was good enough to favour me with some of the experiences of one who has now been boycotted for close on five years. Miss Thompson—for I am guilty of no indiscretion in mentioning her name—is a lady under middle-age, of great vivacity, an extremely attractive manner, and indomitable resolution. She has been at open war with the League since its foundation, and enforces her rights against her tenants with the most perfect indifference to its menaces. I am told that, although she has frequently had to threaten her tenants with writs, she has never been compelled to have recourse to eviction, for the simple reason that the rent has always been paid. Part of the property she holds in her own right and part in the quality of trustee for a minor ; but whether dealing with the one or with the other, she is equally firm.

She had driven into Tralee accompanied by two armed constables, and, as I was precluded from accepting a hospitable invitation to visit her at her house, she favoured me with more than an hour's conversation as we sauntered in the town gardens.

Miss Thompson has got a garrison of seven constabulary stationed at her house, and she takes as much pride in their smartness and is as particular about the way in which they turn out as if she were the German Kaiser himself. Noticing three constables following us, I jestingly alluded to her "army," when she told me that only two were in attendance on her, and that the third was easily distinguishable as one of the town constables by the absence of that trimness and smartness which were noticeable in her troops. The conditions under which she habitually lives, moves about her farms, and travels on the public roads may be easily imagined. She is extremely active, passes the greater part of the day out of doors, and is always prepared to frustrate any attempt to carry her house by assault or to circumvent her garrison by a surprise. She thinks nothing of driving for many miles after nightfall through the loneliest districts of this thinly-populated country, relying on the pusillanimity of those who have so frequently threatened her, to abstain from attacking her when accompanied by a couple of her "men-at-arms." In Tralee she has recently excited fresh odium under circumstances to which I am about to refer, and it was her horse and car that I saw standing in the street because the hotel-keeper, in whose place she had put them up for years, had received a "recommendation" to discontinue the accommodation, a similar intimation

being sent with the same results to others to whom she might apply.

A tenant had held some land from Miss Thompson, close to Tralee, on lease, at a rental of £95. The lease terminated in March 1885, and the tenant then proposed to take the farm at a reduced rental of £60. This offer she declined. He held over until March of the present year, continuing the negotiations for a reduction of rent; but failing to secure the desired concession, he then surrendered the farm, paying the previous rent for the last year. There was no eviction, but simply a failure to agree upon the basis of a new tenancy. The result was that the farm was boycotted, and Miss Thompson was denied the very commonplace right of having her horse and car put up in livery stables whenever she visited Tralee. Refusing to yield to intimidation, that lady converted the land into meadow, and secured the assistance of men from a different part of the country to cut the grass and make the hay. They, as a matter of course, were boycotted also, but she persevered, and when I saw her she had succeeded in "saving" the hay—that is to say, in having it "cocked" on the farm, though in order to do this she was obliged to make frequent visits to Tralee with her guard of constabulary, in order by personal supervision to see that the work was done. This case is illustrative in its way of the extent to which boycotting is carried, and as showing that the mere repossession of a farm by voluntary surrender, owing to a refusal to reduce the rent by 30 per cent., is considered by the National League as meriting the exercise of its extraordinary powers. Nineteen out of twenty in the position of Miss

Thompson would have succumbed, and either assented to the terms offered to her or allowed the farm to become derelict. But this struggle to vindicate rights, which in any other portion of the United Kingdom would be unquestioned, involves a wear and tear of human energy and endurance, not to say an exhibition of personal courage, which is not conceivable save by those who are obliged to sustain it; and I was certainly not surprised when this heroic lady freely confessed that she had begun to doubt whether the game was worth the candle. It is not very astonishing that the National League reigns practically supreme, and that the bulk of the population submit to a yoke which they are powerless to cast off.

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VIII.

THURLES.

THE general condition of things is substantially the same in the various counties in the south-west of Ireland, and what is true of one is, save in one particular, true of the rest. Kerry is, as I remarked, the scene of more violent outrages than the adjoining counties in Munster, and this is all the more remarkable, as until a few years since it had the credit of being an exceptionally peaceable region. Moonlighting is conducted in Kerry on a scale unknown elsewhere, and not a tithe of the predatory visits made to farmhouses is made public, owing to the unwillingness of the victims to make representations to the authorities, thus provoking prosecutions and bringing down on their own heads future punishment either by boycotting or by attempts on life or property. A Roman Catholic clergyman of high position, and possessing exceptional opportunities of obtaining information, assured me that crime was developed in the direct ratio of the multiplication of the branches of the National League. There were eight such branches in Kerry about a year since, whereas there are now fifty, and one of the consequences of the increase of crime is the necessity of largely augmenting the numbers of the constabulary in particular districts. Where half-a-dozen constables sufficed a few years since for the preservation of the peace and the protection of property, fifty are now required; and in Castleisland, which, with the

surrounding district, has an exceptionally bad name, the previous force of fifteen constables has been increased to 120. Of these, and also of the constabulary stationed elsewhere, the greater number are engaged on protection duty, whilst very few indeed are left for patrol work. The consequence is, that the moonlighters have it pretty much their own way, and the constabulary incur an amount of blame which is wholly undeserved. No men have deserved better of the country than the Royal Irish Constabulary by their thorough loyalty and efficiency. But the Government would do well to recognize the fact that they are now submitted to influences which in the long run must tell to the prejudice of even the best organized and best disciplined men in the world. Their employment on protection duty is particularly harassing and thankless, and although huts are constructed for their accommodation when employed in small bodies, they are, when acting singly or couples, frequently obliged to make shift in cabins that in England would not be considered fit for the temporary accommodation of cattle. But by far the most serious source of demoralization to which they are exposed is the daily evidence afforded to them of the utter powerlessness of the law they are employed to enforce. When some outrage is committed, and they are sent to the spot, they have generally but little difficulty in ascertaining who are the culprits, but they are unable to obtain the necessary evidence to justify a prosecution, much less to obtain a conviction. Those who talk glibly about enforcing the ordinary law in Ireland overlook the fact that it cannot be enforced, at least in respect to indictable offences, and to a great extent in respect to those

of a minor class, without the co-operation of the people. Witnesses must give evidence and jurymen must convict, in order that the law may be administered, and in the south-west of Ireland neither class will do the one nor the other. Police can only be of service in preventing the commission of crime, and in discovering and bringing to justice those who have violated the law. But the Irish constabulary see that they can only discharge the former function when they are engaged in protecting some individual or his premises, and that notwithstanding the moral conviction that they can lay their hands on the outrage-mongers, they are unable to secure their punishment, and they are consequently disheartened and demoralized by the fruitlessness of their most strenuous endeavours to do their duty. At the last Kerry Assizes a prisoner asked Baron Dowse to assign him counsel, and elicited the following reply : " You need have no fear. I know this county well, and the safest place in it is the dock."

It is a frequent complaint with the Nationalist Party that the increase of police in disturbed districts greatly adds to the pecuniary burdens of the inhabitants, while at the same time it is reproachfully added that the constabulary do little or nothing for the extra expenditure. I have just explained the reason why the constabulary, save by the protection they give to those who move about in danger of their lives, are enabled to do but little to prevent or to punish outrage. But it is an incontrovertible fact that in many of the districts in this region of Ireland the rates and taxes have reached proportions at which, on the other side of St. George's Channel, men would stand aghast.

The poor rates in many places exceed four shillings in the pound, and the county cess and local taxes bring the total charge to between eight shillings and nine shillings in the pound. It must be admitted, therefore, that when "hard times" are taken into consideration, the depreciation in the value of agricultural produce of all kinds, the friction between the landlords and tenants, the baneful influence of the National League, and the total uncertainty what will be the next move on the political chessboard in England, all classes in Ireland are compelled to carry on the struggle for existence under very unfavourable conditions. The increase in the poor rates is not due to any abnormal development of pauperism, for, on the contrary, it has of late years notably diminished, but to the recklessness with which the guardians distribute the funds at their disposal. They, like four-fifths of the Irish representatives in the House of Commons, are elected by men of so-called Nationalist sympathies, who, whether willingly or unwillingly, have become connected with the National League, who are actuated by feelings of bitter hostility to the landlord classes, and who have a direct interest in depreciating the value of landed property in order to get rid of the owners on the cheapest possible terms. The guardians accordingly make those who are evicted the special objects of their solicitude, and in the form of outdoor relief £1 a week is generally granted to those who have been thus deprived of their holdings, though their previous earnings may have fallen considerably short of this amount. When Forster's Act for the imprisonment of suspects was in operation the grass widows of the martyrs were allowed assistance

on this scale, and a story is told of a liberated suspect being anything but well received by his wife on his return home. He, however, speedily took his leave, intending again to supply cause for his arrest, as he admitted that he was never so well housed or fed as when he was in prison.

Tipperary several years ago was the most disturbed county in Ireland, and at that time murders and outrages of the most serious description were of frequent occurrence. It has now improved in this respect, but it has simply changed the machinery. The National League branches are in full operation, and the practice of boycotting is no less universal and effective here than in the other counties I have traversed. As a confirmation of the accuracy of my observation, I will cite a witness who regards the National League with special favour. I mean one of the special correspondents of *United Ireland*:—"The old method," he writes, "which made Tipperary a name of terror, has given place to the passive resistance that neither law nor authority can grapple with. The new system is a thousand times more effective than the blunderbuss, and it has the great advantage of being safe and sinless." I freely admit that as the law stands it is safe, though opinions would probably differ as to its being sinless, but these are some of the results of the meritorious practice of boycotting which this gentleman regards as highly satisfactory:—"When a landlord exterminates (evicts?) a tenant, and gets a Land Corporation emergency man in his place, he passes from the frying-pan into the fire. He is the biter bitten. It is a game of ruin for the landlords of the district. Their estates are returning to primæval

wildness; the buildings from which the tenants were driven are dilapidated. Fourteen or fifteen hundred acres of land are in the care of emergency men, who have been brought from England and elsewhere at heavy expense. Their average pay is 30s. a week, for which they do as much work as they please. Cattle to be sold must be sent by divers routes and to distant markets." And this, save the mark, is in a county which stands in favourable contrast to Kerry, as quiet and peaceable, which is almost completely free from crime, there having been but one case in the calendar at the recent assizes for the South Riding, a Whiteboy offence, in which there was no conviction.

On a subsequent occasion, when summing up the evidence which I am now collecting on the present condition of Ireland, I may perhaps be tempted to offer some suggestions as to the manner in which it ought to be dealt with, but for the present I simply desire to place on record facts about which there is no dispute whatever. Whether the practice of boycotting be reprehensible, or sinless, as is alleged by the chief organ of the National Party in Ireland, it is incontestable that the effects are most disastrous to all classes. With credit at an end, rates and taxes reaching the figures I have mentioned, the rights of property and also of labour placed in abeyance, personal liberty, comfort, and happiness affected to a degree of which only the victims can form an adequate idea, considerable tracts of fertile land temporarily blotted off the surface of the country as if they were so many arid wastes, the value of produce greatly reduced, the administration of justice paralyzed, and

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the jurisdiction of the established tribunals superseded by that of the numberless branches of the National League, the condition of such portions of Ireland as I have visited within the past fortnight is as terrible, as disheartening, and I had almost said as hopeless, as it is possible for the human mind to imagine as existing in a civilized country. The immediate effects are bad enough, but the not very remote consequences which must inevitably follow will be immeasurably worse.

IX.

LONDONDERRY.

It has been a matter of frequent remark during the discussions to which the Irish question has given rise, especially during the past six months, that within this island there are two distinct Irelands, one constituted by the northern province, and the other by the remaining three. And this is so to a very considerable degree, but by no means to the extent that is popularly supposed. In the first place, in Ulster the population are on the whole much more thrifty, provident, and industrious than in the other provinces, possibly because they possess a great deal of the Scotch element; and, in the second, the Protestants have in the towns a marked ascendancy. It is impossible to pass from the South to the North without being immediately struck by the prominent part which religion plays here in the consideration of all political questions. It gives to them a distinct local colouring, which is novel if it cannot be correctly described as refreshing. And it must be observed that there are particular seasons of the year when what may be termed the religious epidemic rages with peculiar virulence. In July and August it is at its worst, because in these months there happen to fall certain anniversaries which seem to impose upon the extreme or Orange section of the Protestant community the obligation of somewhat offensively flaunting their superiority over their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. It is at no time pleasant to be sat upon,

and it must be still more unpleasant to be trampled upon, and if a section of the Ulster Protestants do not actually trample on the Roman Catholics, they frequently go considerably out of their way to make them feel that if it were not for their abundant charity they would certainly do so. Processions, attended by bands playing airs commemorative of victories gained a couple of centuries ago over the Catholic Irish, are not conducive to good-fellowship, especially when the processions take place and the airs are played, as the French say, "with intention." Rival processions, with rival bands playing different airs simultaneously, are organized as a matter of course, and then all the necessary elements for a "scrimmage" are supplied. When I was in Enniskillen the other evening a demonstration and counter-demonstration of this kind took place in the neighbourhood, and very serious fears for the peace and security of the town were entertained by the authorities, as it was almost denuded of police owing to the drafting of nearly the entire of the local force to Belfast. The Orange leaders, however, under these exceptional circumstances, considerably forebore to march the procession through the streets, the small crowds which collected in the main thoroughfare were kept apart, and with the exception of the stabbing of a Roman Catholic in the abdomen by a Protestant, within a hundred yards of my hotel, the rejoicings were brought to a conclusion without any untoward incident.

The 12th of August is always a "grand" day in Derry. It is the anniversary of the close of the memorable siege when the army of James II. was compelled to retire discomfited from before its walls. The inhabitants have good reason to be proud of the valour

and endurance of their aucestors, and in the past century, and even well into the present one, the annual celebration of the raising of the siege was a ceremony in which Protestants and Roman Catholics took an equal and a disinterested part. But the growth of a strong religious antagonism subsequent to, but not directly in consequence of, the Union, together with the foundation of the Orange Society, had the effect of completely altering the character of the customary festivities. That which had been previously regarded as the deliverance of an entire community, irrespective of creed, from arbitrary rule, came to be treated as a great step towards the establishment of Protestant supremacy in Ireland, and as year succeeded year this novel feature in the celebration became more accented. The gallant cry of "No surrender," coming from the garrison and inhabitants of a town reduced to extremities by famine and disease, became prostituted into a sectarian watchword, and is now invariably employed in Ulster to indicate both the moral and the physical superiority of the Protestant over the Catholic population. A religious service was celebrated on the present occasion in St. Augustine's Church, as the Cathedral is under repairs, and a sermon preached in which a special appeal was made to the congregation not to exhibit apathy in the celebration of an anniversary so intimately connected with the vindication of their Protestant rights. The usual procession of Orange Lodges and Apprentice Boys then took place around the historic walls of Derry, and although by virtue of one of the many Coercion Acts passed by the British Legislature the Protestant zealots were precluded from discharging the artillery with which they provided themselves some

years since, they made a brave show, with their banners flying and their bands playing the peace-inspiring strains of "The Boyne Water" and "Croppies lie down." The monument raised upon the walls to the memory of Walker, Bishop and Governor of Derry during the famous siege, bears an inscription paying a just tribute to the gallantry of the garrison and townspeople. When, however, it records that the result of the struggle was to confer on "their posterity the blessings of civil and religious liberty," the hypercritical may be tempted to point out that for more than a century afterwards "civil and religious liberty" were so extremely one-sided that the Roman Catholics were absolutely denied both the one and the other. I should add that, with the exception of stone-throwing, with the result of a few cut heads, and the employment of an ill-constructed infernal machine consisting of a bottle containing paper and a small quantity of gunpowder with a fuse, which was happily cut before it exploded, the day's proceedings passed off quietly enough. The city was in charge of three resident magistrates, 100 additional police were sent in from the county of Leitrim, whilst the military were represented by detachments from the Black Watch and East Lancashire Regiments.

It is, for many reasons, to be regretted that the "religious colouring," which I have already referred to, should be so all-pervading in this part of Ireland, because, amongst other things, it increases the difficulties of obtaining accurate information on the matters in which I am interested. The exclusive claims made to "loyalty" by the Ulster Protestants are necessarily accompanied by imputations, either open or covert, of

disloyalty against the "Romish" section of the people, and if loyalty be regarded in a certain specific sense there can be no doubt that these imputations are not unfounded. The Ulster Protestants know that their security depends upon the maintenance of the English connection, because, notwithstanding the specious promises of the Nationalists, they have only too much reason to fear that an Irish Parliament, with the existing franchise, would give to the Roman Catholics the absolute command of the situation, and that they would abuse this power to the prejudice of the Protestants. They fear that "civil and religious liberty" would be all on the other side, and therefore they are resolved not to sacrifice their existing rights without a bitter and, if necessary, bloody struggle. This is only common sense and human nature, and it is equally ridiculous and dangerous to ignore such a factor in dealing with the Irish question. But I cannot bring myself to place Ulster loyalty on any higher footing. If the sectarian element were eliminated there would scarcely be less discontent in the North than in the other portions of Ireland. The land question is just as pressing here as it is elsewhere, and there is not very much to choose between the county of Donegal and the county of Cork. Ulster tenant farmers, it must not be forgotten, secured for themselves, without the aid of the Legislature, the "custom" of tenant right, long before the first feeble attempts were made in the other provinces to alter the feudal relations between landlord and tenant, and since the passing of the Land Acts none have had more frequent recourse to them, or been more successful in reducing the landlords' rents to fair judicial rents, than the tenant farmers of this province.

They will hear nothing of Home Rule, but they are nearly as clamorous as their brethren of the South for further reductions in view of the depreciation in the value of produce. This was perfectly recognized by the Nationalist candidates in the North at the late General Election. They were careful to say nothing about an Irish Parliament, and rested their claims on their promises to obtain further measures of Land Law Reform. The general feeling on the subject, even amongst the extreme Orangemen, may be gathered from a remark attributed to a staunch loyalist, who said that he was ready to walk as many miles in a day as any man to shoot a Papist, but all the same he wanted his land cheap.

The apparent devotion of the Protestants of Ulster, and especially of the tenant farmer class, to England, must therefore not be construed as an unqualified acceptance of the existing order of things, or of pleased acquiescence in the manner in which Irish interests are made subordinate to party considerations in England. I may be wrong, but I cannot help thinking that Ulster loyalty closely resembles that of the fag at a public school to the big boy who protects him. He believes in the prowess of his champion, he relies upon it for his own security, and he never falters for a moment in his devotion. But this does not prevent him occasionally thinking that his protector would be none the worse if he did not put on quite so much side, if he showed himself a trifle less selfish and overbearing, and if he was not so ready to throw his boots at his head on the slightest provocation. Of one thing I am perfectly convinced. Ulster loyalty is absolutely dependent on the English connection.

If Ulster is cast adrift and the Protestant minority left to shift for themselves, it is quite possible there would be a united Ireland; but it would be ever animated by the bitterest hostility to England, and none would be more bitter or unrelenting than the Protestants of Ulster.

The Irish Society, of which Sir J. Whittaker Ellis, M.P., is governor, and Mr. Frank Greene, deputy governor, are over here now on their annual visitation. When James I. undertook the plantation of Ulster, the native Irish having been pretty nigh exterminated by famine and the sword, a commission was issued by the Crown to make inquisition respecting the forfeited lands in Ulster, and application was made to the City of London to supply the necessary funds for the plantation. "Four wise, grave, and discreet citizens," having been sent over "to view the situation proposed for the new colony," made a favourable report to the Court of Common Council, which was adopted. A provisional agreement was concluded between the Lords of the Privy Council and the representatives of the London Corporation, and the constitution of the new Company of "Undertakers" designated the Irish Society was set forth in the agreement and shortly afterwards embodied in a royal charter. A sum of £40,000, subsequently increased to £60,000, which, considering the then value of money and the price of commodities, was very large, was subscribed by the various Livery Companies of London, and estates were allotted proportionately to the outlay. It was provided that Derry and Coleraine should be rebuilt and fortified by the Irish Society, and these towns became their property. Without

following the vicissitudes of the society as Irish landowners during more than two centuries and a half, it may be sufficient to say that their funds, exclusively of what is necessary for the machinery of the society, are exclusively spent upon their property. The Cathedral of Londonderry was erected entirely at the cost of the society, and is now, under their supervision, in process of restoration. The society have also built several chapels and churches, established free elementary schools and colleges, endowed scholarships, aided in carrying out public works, promoting railways, developing trade and manufactures, and advancing in a variety of ways the interests of the inhabitants of Londonderry and Coleraine.

X.

RATHMULLAN, CO. DONEGAL.

THE little village from which this letter is dated is very prettily situated about midway on the west coast of Lough Swilly. On the opposite side the peninsula of Innishowen separates the Lough from Lough Foyle, whilst behind and to the westward lie the highlands of Donegal. Their scenery is distinguished by a grandeur and ruggedness which well deserve the attention of the tourist; but the soil is for the most part of a poor quality. The population is sparse, and large numbers of the holdings are so small that the matter for wonder is, that the tenants manage to exist, much less to pay rent for the few acres which, on the fulfilment of that necessary condition, they are permitted to call their own. The region of Gweedore has during the past week been the scene of numerous evictions in which a small army of constabulary has been engaged, and sensational accounts have appeared in the Nationalist organs of the circumstances under which these evictions have taken place. On the legal merits there is of course nothing to be said, because, if the landlord is not paid his rent, however small or however severe the struggle to produce it, he is entitled to recover possession of his property. On what may be termed the moral merits I forbear to offer any opinion, because the considerations which may influence him may be of a

very complex character, and it may very well be that unless he enforces his rights in certain portions of his estates, he may fail to secure their recognition in others. But, speaking generally, I may say that not only in this country, but in others that I have visited, the difficulties which arise between landlords and tenants are in a direct proportion to the smallness of the holdings. Men who live on farms of three or five acres, even if they had them for nothing, are hardly able to support themselves and their families, and this class has long been in the habit of supplementing their incomes—if such a term is not a cruel misnomer—by harvest labour in England. There are, I believe, 120,000 tenant farmers in Ireland whose holdings do not exceed half-a-dozen acres. They are, however, precisely those who suffer worst when the extreme rigour of the law is enforced against them. Capital they have none; they live as best they can on the slender produce of their small holdings, and when times are “hard” they are literally reduced to destitution. When the next measure of land law reform is undertaken their interests should not be forgotten.

This mischief of subdividing holdings, which, I may add, has been greatly enhanced by the legislation which has given to tenants the right of dealing with their farms as they please, independently of their landlords, has long been recognized by the latter. I had the opportunity of speaking to a gentleman, the possessor of a considerable estate in this neighbourhood, who informed me that under the old system of Ulster tenant right it was his practice to purchase generally at five years’ purchase the farms of those

tenants who desired to give up possession, and then dispose of them to tenants with adjacent holdings, thus increasing the size of the farms into which his property was subdivided. That has been rendered practically impossible under the new system, and he views with considerable apprehension, and, as it seems to me, with justice, the steady increase of small farmers, who will be unable either to meet their engagements or to work their farms. Those who believe that the conversion of this class into owners, even upon the most favourable terms, would be beneficial, will do well to take note of the position of those farmers who hold at almost nominal rents under what is known as perpetuity leases—that is to say, leases extending over hundreds of years. They are for all purposes absolute owners, though, their estate being leasehold, they are subject to eviction if they do not pay the small reserved rent. Some forty years ago, at the time of the famine, they were infinitely worse off than the tenants at ordinary rents, because they had no capital to meet pressing necessities and to provide seed for their land, and there was no one who had any interest in assisting them. With the ordinary tenants the case was different. The landlord knew that if he did not provide them with the means of producing crops for the coming year he would lose not only the current but the future rent, and he accordingly helped them. Now, there are some of those tenants who hold land at 2s. 6d. per acre, which is well worth 15s. or £1, who at the present moment declare, whether truthfully or otherwise, their inability to pay their rent, and proceedings in eviction are about to be taken against them by the superior lord.

This fact is significant, because, if under such favourable circumstances men who hold at rents confessedly far below the actual value refuse to pay them, it is permissible to doubt whether a peasant proprietorship upon any terms which the Legislature would sanction would prove a successful experiment.

It may not, perhaps, be out of place to recall the fact that in the eighteenth century the greater portion of the land in Ireland was let on long leases upon favourable terms, and the result was that the immediate tenants of the landlords sublet to others, and those in turn to others under them, with the necessary consequence of creating middlemen,—who became the curse of the country. This evil has been corrected, but the Legislature has too frequently lost sight of the necessity of identifying the interests of landlords and tenants, instead of treating these classes as necessarily antagonistic, and widening the breach between them. Under the recent Land Acts it is not too much to say that landlords and tenants are mutually led to regard each other as enemies. A striking illustration of this is afforded by what is known as the system of conacre-letting. A landlord knows that if he parts with a farm, even on the terms of a yearly tenancy, he cannot dispossess his tenant without paying him such a price as he chooses to set upon his tenant right. In order to avoid this the practice has arisen of letting a farm for a single season, the tenant being at liberty to make as much out of it as he pleases within that period, and being obliged to surrender possession when he has gathered in his crops. Of course this is not tenancy in any true sense of the term, and resolves itself into a mere hiring of the use of the land for a few

months by a landlord who is indifferent about farming it himself.

In dealing with the land question in Ireland persons are too apt to suppose that there are only two classes with which the Legislature has to deal—viz., the landlords and the tenants. This, however, is not so. There is another and a very numerous class which must be taken into account. I mean the labourers. Already a very strong antagonism has arisen between these latter and the tenant farmers, the labourers anticipating that the result of the present agitation may be that the tenants will become owners, and they will be denied much of the employment which is now afforded to them by the landlords. And it would be idle to pretend that their apprehensions are groundless. The labouring class cannot find as constant or as liberal employers as they have hitherto done, if the landlords were expatriated and they were made dependent upon men who would have neither the inclination nor the means to supply them with work.

Here in the North, as in the South, the tenants complain that they are called upon to pay more than the land is worth, as measured by the present prices of produce. But, as I remarked in a previous letter, the fault is primarily that of the tenants, because they do not make as much out of their farms as they might do. The Irish are, and I fear always will continue, behind the English and the Scotch in the art of husbandry. They are content to follow the old systems, and, either from want of inclination or of capital, they do not provide themselves with improved implements. The National League has in various notices which I have seen prohibited the use of machines, upon the

protective ground that their employment prevents men getting work, and although from a politico-economical point of view the League may be wrong, the apprehension of boycotting prevents any person being so ill-advised as to question the soundness of its reasoning. Then I have heard it stated on all sides that the farmers live beyond their means, that they never keep accounts of the receipts and expenditure incidental to their farming operations, that they do not dream of laying by any of their profits to meet the contingency of a possible bad harvest or a fall in the prices of stock or produce. And so far as I am in a position to judge, I must say I think these charges are well founded. When all is said, Irish farmers are neither as provident nor as prudent as they might be, and they are too ready to call upon the landlord to recoup them for losses which, with a little prudence and care, they might avoid. To this must be added the undoubted fact, that in their eagerness to acquire land they pay preposterous sums for the tenant right; or, what is worse, involve themselves in debt to make the purchase, and thus deprive themselves of any command of capital for the fitting utilization of the land they have acquired.

XI.

BELFAST.

It is not my intention to make any special reference to the riots which have recently brought discredit on this populous and thriving city, and have been attended with a most lamentable loss of human life. The causes of these riots have but little connection with the present general condition of Ireland, save so far as they illustrate that unhappy sectarianism which has now for nearly a century prevented Protestants and Catholics uniting for any great national or patriotic purpose. To assert that they have any connection with Lord Randolph Churchill's speech delivered here some months ago is the veriest balderdash. The religious epidemic which, in my letter from Londonderry, I mentioned as being prevalent in Ulster in July and August, has been exceptionally severe this year in Belfast, and has been intensified by the recent parliamentary contest, which resulted in the return of a Nationalist for one of the divisions of the city. The clamour raised by the Orange party against the constabulary is as unjust as it is ungenerous. That the majority of this force is Roman Catholic is inevitable, considering the population from which it is recruited ; but the allegations so flippantly made, that it was sent by the late Irish Secretary for the purpose of coercing, if not of murdering, the Protestants of Belfast, and that the constabulary, animated by sectarian zeal, readily availed themselves of the opportunity of shooting

down the members of a different creed, are so palpable a misrepresentation, and so gross and transparent a slander on a most meritorious and thoroughly honest and loyal body of men that they would not deserve even a passing notice if they were not so persistently circulated. Every man of ordinary intelligence in Belfast, whatever his creed, must know perfectly well that in perhaps no other country in the world would the Executive Government have allowed its patience to be so severely tried before putting, or rather stamping, down its foot in a manner which, if it did arouse religious feelings in the minds of the rioters, would probably cause them to reflect on the facility of transition to a future state. The epidemic is now, however, dying out. Protestants and Catholics will become as good friends as ever for the next ten months, until the recurring anniversaries of victories, which many sane men still believe were gained in the cause of religious liberty, will again occasion a temporary suspension of their amicable relations. I shall not be surprised to find that many of the prosecutions to which the late riots must give rise will totally collapse. By the time the next assizes come on, the members of the rival creeds will have made it up, and the necessary evidence will not be forthcoming. At least, this has been the experience of the past.

The present may, perhaps, be not an inappropriate occasion on which to refer to what may be termed the religious aspect of the Irish question. The English, as a rule, know very little about Ireland, or perhaps I should say about their own country, because Ireland and England, as we all know, form parts of one single and undivided kingdom. Nothing is more frequent

than allusions to the loyal Protestant minority, with the accompanying inference that the Catholics, with perhaps some rare exceptions, belong to the disloyal majority. Now, I declare with confidence that no more serious or mischievous misapprehension can possibly exist. If by loyalty is meant desire to maintain the British connection, not necessarily from feelings of attachment, but from considerations of expediency, I believe that if Ireland was polled to-morrow, and every man was free to record his vote without fear of the consequences, a majority would be found in favour of maintaining the Union. But however this may be, there is a vast number of Catholics of all classes, high and low, clerical and lay, who are as bitterly opposed to the transfer of power to the leaders of the National party as are the most fanatical of the Orangemen of Ulster. With comparatively few exceptions, all those Catholics who have a stake in the country justly apprehend the misuse of these powers which would be made by an Irish Parliament with a majority of National Leaguers in it, and an Irish Government in which the American-Irish element would not improbably largely predominate. The Ulster dissentients from the Separatist policy are tolerably compact, and might find means of providing for their own security. But the isolated sections of Loyalist Catholics and Protestants in the other provinces would be placed in considerable jeopardy, and that jeopardy would naturally be increased in proportion to the resistance offered by the men of Ulster to accept a Parliament in which their representatives would be hopelessly outnumbered, and a Government in which it may safely be predicted they would have no voice whatever. I may refer to

Irish loyalty, in the popular acceptation of the term, in a subsequent letter, but I am now simply desirous of pointing out that, should any proposals similar in character to those of the late Government be again revived and made the subject of discussion in Parliament, there is an important section—in my opinion politically and socially the most important section—of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland which has the very strongest motives, because of a distinctly selfish character, for opposing any relaxation of the existing bonds of Imperial control.

Any treatment of this branch of the subject would be incomplete without reference to the position in which the Irish Catholic priesthood now stand to their flocks, to the special political aspirations they may entertain, and to the general tenor of their teaching in connection with the relations which should be maintained between those who accept their guidance and their Protestant fellow-countrymen. Thanks to the indomitable energy of Daniel O'Connell, the emancipation of the Roman Catholics was secured, and for the first time their clergy became their political leaders. The influence which they exercised began to wane with the organization of the various Fenian associations some years ago, consequent on the condemnation of secret societies by the Church of Rome and the necessary antagonism which arose between the obligations of religious duty and the promptings of misdirected patriotism. It was not, however, until the general election of 1880 that the clergy discovered that in political matters they were losing touch of their flocks, and that the spiritual influence which had heretofore constituted so potent a factor in determining

the choice of what might be termed the "popular" candidates had almost disappeared. The *imprimatur* of the Catholic bishop of the diocese used to be a condition precedent before a Liberal could venture to issue an address to a constituency, but at the elections I speak of it was found that the recommendation of the Protestant leader of the newly-created Nationalist party counted far more in a candidate's favour than the benedictions of the entire hierarchy. This was a very serious discovery for the priesthood to make; and it is needless to say that the general elections of last year must have satisfied even the most sceptical of the clergy that Mr. Parnell had undisputed control of the Nationalist vote. Between 1880 and 1886 the priesthood had therefore the alternative of seeing themselves out-distanced by their flocks or of accompanying them, and the dissensions which it was only too notorious arose between some of the highest members of the Irish episcopate testified to the serious character of the issue. Of the indirect negotiations by which Mr. Gladstone hoped to secure the influence of the Holy See in turning the scale against the Nationalists I need not speak, but it might have occurred to any one but a statesman that a *quid* is invariably required for a *quo*, and that if it was worth the while of her Majesty's Government to secure the influence of the Pope in dealing with the great bulk of the Irish population, the Envoy to the Vatican ought to have been instructed to ring the visitors' bell instead of going down the area steps. I suppose that even Popes have their susceptibilities, and the Holy Father might not unreasonably object to being approached with so much secrecy and so many precautions, in

order that an English Minister might be enabled in strict "Gladstonese" to assure Parliament that negotiations with the Vatican were never even so much as thought of.

The Papal selection of Dr. Walsh for the archiepiscopal see of Dublin marked the failure of Sir George Errington's mission, and established an apparent community of interest between the Catholic clergy and the Nationalist, or, as it may more correctly be termed, the Separatist party. Some of the first utterances of the new Archbishop savoured rather of the Convention Hall of Chicago than of apostolic charity, and created as much surprise in Catholic as in Protestant circles. With the direct encouragement thus given by the Primate of Dublin, the clergy had practically no option but to go with the current, and as the new Nationalism had found one of its principal outlets in the National League, they saw it was impossible to avoid identifying themselves with that institution. I do not wish to be understood as meaning that the large numbers of the Irish Catholic clergy who are not only members of the League, but who preside at the meetings of its branches, are unwilling assistants. Many of them, I believe, are so, and are desirous of controlling the action of the League within reasonable limits. Others are no less "thorough" than their lay colleagues. But the point upon which I wish to lay stress is, that the present movement is of lay and not of clerical origin, that the clergy, instead of being the leaders, are for the most part led, and that, dependent as they are upon the "dues" of their parishioners, it has been practically impossible for them, whatever may be their sentiments, to separate themselves from

their flocks upon the political issues which are now raised.

The settlement of the Irish question upon any basis which would be satisfactory to the whole people has been rendered much more difficult by the Ultramontane spirit which has guided the councils of the Catholic hierarchy in this country for more than a quarter of a century. Since the death of Dr. Murray, one of the most liberal-minded prelates that ever filled the Catholic archiepiscopal throne of Dublin, the apparent policy of the Church has been to widen the breach which separates the Protestant and Catholic communities. Any system of secular education, under which the two sects might at an age when the mind is most impressionable meet on a common footing, has been sedulously tabooed. Trinity College was interdicted to the Catholic youth, though they were exempted from the very mild and apparently innocuous theological teaching which forms part of the ordinary university curriculum. The Queen's Colleges were stamped as "Godless," because sectarian teaching of any kind was vigorously excluded; but, perhaps, the strongest step taken by the Catholic Church to prevent the ultimate fusion of the Protestant and Catholic sections of the people, and the consignment to oblivion of those unhappy differences which, I believe, constitute the only real obstacle to a united Irish people, practically dictating their own terms as to their form of government, was the prohibition of what are known as mixed marriages. The Catholic must not marry the Protestant, because, the sanction of the Church being withheld, any ceremony of marriage, however recognized by law, is treated as

absolutely invalid ; the Catholic who thus acts is excommunicated and treated as living in a state of prostitution, and the children are, I presume, regarded as being born out of wedlock. The effects of this prohibition are more far-reaching than the mere prevention of "matches," which would otherwise be made. They are manifested in the greater accentuation of the distinction, social and religious, between the two sects, and in the not unnatural fears entertained by the Irish Protestants of the uses to which a Legislature, dominated by Catholic influences, would put its strength. The ground of objection to these marriages, that the ceremony is a sacrament and cannot be shared by individuals of different creeds, is perfectly logical. But, if I may say so without irreverence or disrespect, the Catholic Church is rather "eccentric" in its application of this principle. Mixed marriages are sanctioned by it on the English side of St. George's Channel, or, what comes to the same thing, the necessary dispensation for the celebration is not withheld. When a couple of "loving hearts" over here mean to be united they are not to be balked by the obstacle of taking monthly return tickets to a Welsh watering-place, where their courtship will not be impeded, whilst the necessary term of residence runs its course and enables them to comply with the formalities of the law, and also to secure the benediction of their respective Churches. If the spirit of sectarian animosity and proselytism could only become dormant in Ireland for half a century, and if Irishmen, both Protestant and Catholic, could only bring themselves to regard the ultimate fate of their neighbours'

souls with the philosophical indifference which is generally manifested in other Christian lands, Irish Nationalism would become a reality and a power instead of a sham and a source of division and weakness, and Ireland would recover that prosperity which she so ardently desires, and instead of paralyzing, would materially add to the strength of the empire of which, by the necessity of her geographical position, she must always form a part.

XII.

BRAY, CO. WICKLOW.

IN some of my earlier letters I directed attention to the large sums paid for tenants' interests in their holdings, and also to the unsaleability of the ownership of land upon any terms which a landlord could with ordinary prudence accept, or which, in the case of sales by the Landed Estates Court, that tribunal would authorize. The estimate of prairie value which was set up by Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt as a not unreasonable compensation to the landlords for parting with their property naturally made a great impression on the minds of the tenant farmers throughout the country by appealing to their cupidity, whilst the prospect of the power of imposing terms on the landlords being conferred on a Parliament in which the Nationalist leaders would be predominant, necessarily excited hopes that the occupier would obtain the freehold for little or nothing. These hopes have not yet been dissipated, and since the downfall of Mr. Gladstone's Administration the exponents of the policy of separation have not ceased to impress upon their followers that the concession of Home Rule to Ireland has become inevitable, and that the Irish Parliament will take care to expropriate the landlords on terms far less favourable to them than Mr. Gladstone was willing to grant. Adopting the language of the ex-Premier, they declare that the sands in the glass have now run out, and that the

landlords will speedily be at their mercy. And indeed it is somewhat curious to notice the different lights in which the two Irish Bills of the late Government are regarded in this country and in England by those who have faith in Mr. Gladstone. The Nationalists here are of opinion that the Home Rule policy of the late Government would not have been condemned by the English constituencies if it had not been weighted by the Land Purchase Bill, which would have imposed a present burden of £50,000,000, and a prospective burden of £100,000,000 more on the British taxpayer. On the contrary, in England the followers of the late Prime Minister attribute his defeat exclusively to his scheme of Irish autonomy, and believe that if the Land Purchase Bill had stood alone it would have been accepted, as the maintenance of Imperial rule in Ireland in its integrity would have furnished a sufficient guarantee for the repayment of the money which it was proposed to advance for the creation of a tenant proprietary in that country.

I have accordingly found in the southern, the western, the northern, and here in the home counties, that, notwithstanding the universal earth-hunger which exists, and which has been considerably whetted by the expectations to which I have referred, there has for many months past been a great unwillingness on the part of tenants to come to terms with landlords willing to sell their ownership, and two very weighty considerations operated in deterring those whom one would have expected to see coming into the market as purchasers. In the first place, there was the inability to value upon any normal scale rights of ownership

which were actually threatened with confiscation, and in the second there was the terrible uncertainty about the burdens which might be imposed upon land by an Irish Parliament. I referred in a previous letter to the immense depreciation occasioned in the value of bank and railway stocks and other securities, owing to the possibility of their being roughly treated by an Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer; and for precisely the same reason the value of land in Ireland sensibly diminished, though the change was necessarily not so striking or so obvious as in the case of shares, whose varying prices are made the subject of daily quotation. A new Government and a new Parliament in Ireland would have to tax something, and, whether rightly or wrongly, it has been assumed that the fiscal burdens incidental to "property" would be largely increased. Investors have no inducement to become Irish landlords, with the threat of confiscation hanging over their heads; whilst tenants, independently of the hopes engendered by the promised confiscation, were in the dark as to the burdens they might have to bear in the event of becoming freeholders.

The operation of the Land Purchase Act of 1885, passed just a twelvemonth ago, may serve to illustrate the remark I have just made of the direct relation between the mere possibility of an Irish Parliament such as Mr. Gladstone proposed and the depreciation in the value of land, not merely to the present owners, but to any who might step into their places. Lord Ashbourne's Act, as it is termed, provides tenants facilities for purchasing their holdings which I believe are without a counterpart in any country in the world. I do not propose even to summarize its provisions, but

I may state briefly the fundamental principles on which it is based. In the event of a landlord being willing to sell and a tenant being willing to buy they have simply to arrange the terms of the transfer between them, and the whole of the purchase money is thereupon advanced by the Land Commission appointed by the Act, and the tenant is enabled to buy his holding without paying any money for it. The terms upon which this advance is made, so far from being onerous to the tenant, are extremely favourable, and actually place him, in two very important respects as regards pecuniary obligations, in a better position than he was before. The repayment of the purchase-money is made at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, by half-yearly instalments, extending over 49 years, at the end of which period such payments cease, and the tenant becomes the undisputed owner of the property, subject to no burden other than that of taxation. Let us suppose, for example, that the tenant pays a rent of £10, and that the landlord agrees to sell him the holding at 20 years' purchase, the purchase-money will be £200. On application being made to the Land Commission this sum is advanced—four-fifths are paid to the landlord, and one-fifth is retained in the hands of the Commission, bearing interest at the rate of 3 per cent., until one-fifth of the annual instalments have been paid off by the tenant. The annual interest on £200 at 4 per cent. amounts to £8, and this sum the tenant will pay instead of rent, thus making a saving of £2, or one-fifth of his previous rent, whilst every year he will be approaching the period when the payment of the instalments will absolutely cease. Of course it is

unnecessary to say that if the landlord and tenant agree upon a less number of years' purchase, the operation of the Act is all the more favourable to the tenant. If, in the example given, the holding was sold to the tenant for 15 years' purchase, the yearly instalments would be £6 instead of the former rent of £10. In making these computations it is, however, necessary to bear in mind that the poor rates are shared at present between the landlord and the tenant, and in the event of the latter purchasing his holding, the entire rates would fall upon him. In drawing a comparison between the instalments and the previous rent the former must be increased by the half of the poor rates previously paid by the landlord.

Under an Act offering such exceptional facilities for the creation of a peasant proprietary it might have been supposed that the comparatively small sum of £5,000,000 provided by the Act would have been very speedily snapped up. But such is not the case. It is in Ulster that it has been chiefly turned to account, but I believe that in the four provinces collectively not so much as £1,500,000 has been disposed of by the Land Commission. But it is a very remarkable fact that during the short period that has elapsed since the last general election, and the condemnation of the Home Rule policy of the late Government—nay, within the past two or three weeks—there has been a marked increase in the number of agreements made between landlords and tenants under the provisions of the Act, and on terms not altogether unfavourable to the former. In other words, confidence is being restored. Tenants have

come to recognize the fact that landlords have a marketable interest in the ownership of their land which is worth 19, 20, and in some cases as much as 23 years' purchase of judicial rents; and, what is more significant still, they consider that it is worth their while to purchase on that basis, undeterred by any apprehensions that an Irish Parliament will come into existence with power to tax land. The first impression I formed, that in the country districts the people were either averse to Home Rule or cared nothing about it, is therefore abundantly confirmed.

In connection with Lord Ashbourne's Act I should remark that the sanction of the Land Commission to the bargain made between the landlord and tenant is essential, and this sanction is withheld when it is considered that the property does not furnish sufficient security for the sum required to be advanced, and to this extent some check is imposed on the improvidence or the ignorance of tenants in making their bargains. But otherwise the Commission does not concern itself with the nature of the arrangement made between the landlord and his tenant. One of the conditions of the advance being made for the purchase of the holding is, that one-fifth of the amount must either be left by the landlord in the hands of the Commission, or an equal sum must be placed there as a guarantee deposit by the tenant, or any one else who thinks proper to do so, to be held as security until one-fifth of the instalments have been paid off. This provision, the necessity of which is apparent, has, however, the effect of preventing many landlords availing themselves of

the Act who might otherwise do so. In the great majority of cases this deduction is made from the sum advanced, and there are many landlords who cannot afford to sell on the condition that one-fifth of the purchase money shall be locked up at 3 per cent. for probably ten years. I have found throughout Ireland a very general demand for the extension of the Act, by which, I presume, is meant the creation of greater facilities for its application, because the larger portion of the £5,000,000 which were allotted are untouched. The terms on which the advances are made are as favourable as could be desired, but lands in the neighbourhood of towns, which are known by the appellation of "town park," are excluded from the operation of the Act. The tenants of small holdings derive but little benefit from it, whilst the landlords are greatly hampered by the provision which involves a deduction of one-fifth of the purchase money. These are matters which deserve the attention of the Government if they contemplate extending the operation of the statute.

The leaders of the National League have always done their utmost to prevent the tenant farmers availing themselves of this most beneficial statute, and for the very intelligible reason that in the same proportion as tenants secure a proprietary will they be opposed to that agitation by which the Nationalists gain their subsistence. Accordingly, the tenants have not only been dissuaded from coming to terms with their landlords, but have been threatened with denunciation if they did so as betrayers of the interests of their fellow-tenants by giving to the landlord ownership of

property a substantial value which it has been the persistent object of the previous Land League and the existing National League to reduce to a vanishing point. These tactics have proved only too successful, though it is a healthy sign that within the past month the tenant farmers are beginning to show symptoms of independence. The value of land depends, like that of other commodities, upon surrounding circumstances; but the National League have, in defiance of political economy, declared that landlords should be paid no more than, in accordance with their somewhat peculiar ideas, they are entitled to—namely, prairie value. If the League were formally installed as a Parliament on College Green, no doubt the question would be dealt with legislatively on this basis, but for the present they somewhat arbitrarily draw a line between the marketable value and the prairie value, and declare that no more should be paid by a patriotic tenant. This line, speaking generally, is drawn at seven years' purchase of the judicial rents, which is, of course, a basis upon which no landlord who was not in fear of immediate confiscation would think of parting with his property. The doctrine is also sedulously promulgated, that tenant farmers are as a class too ignorant and too simple-minded to be able to calculate the true value of the property they are buying, and that they are taken advantage of by the landlords and their agents. I am not prepared to say that, in the competition for land, tenants do not unfrequently offer extravagant sums for tenant right, and enter with a light heart into engagements to pay rents which, if there is a fall in the price of pro-

duce, become impossible. But so far as the Land Purchase Act is concerned, the only question a tenant has to determine is whether it is worth his while to effect what in most cases would be a reduction of from 20 to 30 per cent. in his rent, and simultaneously become a proprietor, with the conviction that at the end of forty-nine years the property thus acquired would be released from all payments save taxes.

XIII.

DUBLIN.

BEFORE concluding this series of "notes," which I hope to do in two more letters, I am desirous of making a few general remarks on one or two subjects which I have not yet noticed, and of directing attention to some of the vices which underlie the existing system of administrative government in Ireland. Amongst other panaceæ for Irish disaffection and distress, State-aided emigration has been from time to time offered by English statesmen as a most efficient remedy; and it must be admitted that, if only pursued with the necessary thoroughness and for a sufficient length of time, its success would be undeniable, because there would be no people left to experience distress or to manifest disaffection. But when all is said and done, State-aided—that is to say, enforced—emigration is the last resort of baffled statesmanship, or the only door of escape which can be opened to the population of an exhausted and used-up country. As, however, there is no reason to suppose that Ireland, with her marvellous fertility, and with industrial resources which admit of considerable development, is altogether played out and unable to support 5,000,000 of people, though the population was half as great again some forty years ago, it is impossible to accept the postulate that there is no alternative for large masses of people but to emigrate or starve. A great deal has been said about the attachment of the Irish peasant to the

little bit of land on which he has been born and bred, and it has supplied the theme for much poetical and political rhapsody. But it will be generally admitted that expatriation, however advantageous the prospect it opens, loses a great deal of its attractions if it is enforced instead of being voluntary, and the hostility felt towards England, even by those emigrants who have amassed fortunes and secured positions in America and elsewhere, which they are well aware they would never have secured if they had remained in Ireland, is mainly prompted by the feeling that they were driven from their native land by the English Government. Of one fact there can be no doubt whatever—namely, that the tide of Irish emigration to the West, which England has done so much to assist, if not to provoke and to enforce, during the past half-century, has created on the opposite side of the Atlantic an entirely distinct Ireland, which has become far more difficult for England to deal with than the Ireland with which she is so indissolubly united. It is a poor policy to expend the national funds in increasing the numbers of the enemies of the State. Voluntary emigration from Ireland is sufficiently disastrous in its consequences, because it drains the population of its bone and sinew. It is always the most promising lad in a family that is shipped for New York, because it is known that he will be sure to do well, and will not forget to send remittances to those whom he has left behind. Nor are these hopes disappointed; the amounts annually transmitted from the United States to Ireland in the form of gifts to “the old folks at home” are enormous; but the loss to Ireland in being deprived of the direct services of the best of her children is

becoming felt in every province, and has begun to attract very serious attention. In many of what are termed the congested districts of the North and West, where the people have not the means of living on their miserable holdings, much less of paying rent for them, there is no alternative between emigration and the supply of industrial occupation; but the efforts of the State should be made in the latter direction. The sentiments of the people on the subject of State-aided emigration were not inaptly expressed by a departing Celt on an occasion when Lord Spencer a few years since personally inspected the exodus of a body of emigrants: "Here's the head drover come down to give the last twist to our tails"—a practice which I believe is pursued when sending pigs to market.

A great deal might be said on the subject of what are termed "small industries;" that is to say, industries which may be pursued within the family circle, which necessitate little or no expenditure of capital, and which are sorely neglected in Ireland just for want of a little example and encouragement. It is an old story that it is the pig which pays the rent, but it is perfectly true that too often it is the pig which is depended upon, when, with a very little expenditure of ingenuity and energy, other means might be found of raising money. I cannot here enter into details, but gentlemen with whom I have spoken, and who have devoted considerable attention to the subject, assure me that there are a great variety of ways in which much energy and enterprise that are now dormant might be utilized throughout Ireland. The children in the country districts are too often left in squalor and idleness, for the simple

reason that there is nothing for them to do, and the habits thus acquired are not easily cast off when they reach adult age. By the way, I have been unable to make out why the growth of flax, with the consequent linen industry, is almost exclusively confined to the North of Ireland. Flax would, I believe, grow equally well in other parts of the country, and though it impoverishes the land, I presume its cultivation could be made as remunerative in one province as in another. But before any profitable attempts can be made to add to the existing sources of Irish wealth it is indispensable that those which are already known and turned to more or less account should be invested with a reasonable amount of security and protection. Until men can pursue their vocations and trades, and can turn to the best account their labour or their capital, without the risk of illegal interference at the hands of their fellow-men, it is premature to speculate on the development of further forms of industry.

In my letter from Tralee I dwelt at length on the lawlessness which exists in the south-west of Ireland, the insecurity of life and property, the outrages committed with impunity by "moonlighters," who are little else than banditti, and the universal terrorism occasioned by the interference of the National League with the commonest and most fundamental rights of labour and of property. Within the past few days her Majesty's Government have sent Sir Redvers Buller, a distinguished General, whose laurels have been gained in operations against the Zulus and the Soudanese, on a special mission to Kerry, to organize and employ the Royal Irish Constabulary, and if necessary the military, for the purpose of suppressing

the more violent outrages, to which I have referred, in that county and the county of Clare. At the time that I wrote, Captain Plunkett, in his capacity of divisional magistrate, exercised jurisdiction, not only magisterial but executive, in the counties of Cork, Kerry, and Clare; and, with the aid of the district inspectors of constabulary, the local staff of the Criminal Investigation Department, the general force of constabulary, and, if circumstances demanded it, the military, was responsible for the preservation of the peace in his particular districts. That his efforts were unsuccessful is undeniable, but, as I pointed out in my former letters, this was due to a variety of circumstances. "Moonlighting" can only be prevented by numerous and effective patrols of the constabulary in those parts of the country which are frequented by the banditti; and when outrages are actually committed, the culprits, if captured, which is frequently easy enough, can only be detained and committed for trial if there is evidence forthcoming against them. But, as I stated, the constabulary force in Kerry, largely as it has been increased, is, owing to the drafts made upon it for special protection duty, unable to supply a sufficiency of men for patrols; whilst on the other hand the hopelessness of bringing the offenders to justice, even though there is no moral doubt about their identification, has the effect of demoralizing the constabulary by condemning them to a succession of wild-goose chases. All this I wrote three weeks ago, before General Buller's appointment was thought of.

As I lay no claim to information which is not in the possession of the Government, I am not so vain

as to suppose that it was in consequence of my statement of the condition of things in Kerry being a disgrace to a civilized country that the Government resolved something should be done. But I have no hesitation whatever in saying that what has been done, though I dare say in complete accordance with the traditions of the Irish Office, has been done in the very worst way. It is not possible for the human mind to form an idea of a General without a cocked hat. Wrap him up as you please, invest him with all the attributes of a civil magistrate, deny him a staff, and designate the military officer who would have been its chief by the harmless title of private secretary; but still, if you call on him to discharge duties of a military or quasi-military kind, and for the fit discharge of which he has been selected on the ground of his military experience, then his cocked hat will be ever present to the public eye. It is not, therefore to be wondered at that the Irish, whose reminiscences of martial law have never been allowed entirely to fade away, should have been considerably startled by the appointment of a distinguished English General with *carte blanche* to draw upon the constabulary and her Majesty's forces in Ireland for the restoration of order in Kerry. And when the nomination of General Buller, without any of the subsequent reservations since stated, was first announced, it was the cocked hat which "fetched" the English public, and elicited the praises so liberally bestowed upon the Government for selecting the right man for the right place. No wonder, therefore, that the Irish people felt nervous at the apparent imminence of a campaign in one of their counties.

But the needless jar on the susceptibilities of the people of this country was one of the least of the mischievous effects of this appointment. My principal reason for referring to it is because it illustrates in a very striking manner one of the worst evils of the bureaucratic administration of government in Ireland. I had frequent opportunities for some weeks past of speaking with district inspectors of constabulary and others whose duty it is to provide security for life and property, to preserve the peace, and to make reports upon the general condition of their respective districts, and I was startled and shocked at hearing the extent to which the discharge of their duties was expected to be subordinated to considerations of political expediency. *Surtout pas de zèle* is the maxim which the authorities at Dublin Castle impress upon their subordinates, or if there is to be an exhibition of zeal, it must be manifested in doing that which will be considered acceptable, and making the right kind of reports roseate or red as the situation at Dublin Castle may at the moment demand. It is said that anything can be proved with statistics, and it is no secret that, according as the Government of the day pins its faith or stakes its existence on the efficacy of the ordinary law, or on the necessity of coercion, those who are responsible for the preservation of the peace in Ireland must frame their conduct and make their reports so as to justify the soundness of judgment displayed by Her Majesty's advisers.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the evil consequences of this pernicious system. The people lose all confidence in the good faith and honesty of those to whom they look for protection, the latter become demoralized,

and the general government of the country is conducted upon principles which place in the background the interests of the people governed. If I wanted evidence to justify these strictures, I should call as my witnesses those who have appointed Sir Redvers Buller. Why is this distinguished officer especially sent over to discharge a duty which could as efficiently—I believe more efficiently—be performed by dozens of men connected with the Irish magistracy and constabulary, if they could only rely on the support of their superiors? Simply because he will be independent of Dublin Castle, and will be too big a man to be disavowed. In other words, having sedulously done their best for years past to demoralize the Irish Constabulary, and all that are connected with its administration, the authorities, in apparent despair of finding any one with the necessary firmness and independence to act vigorously in Kerry, send over an English General. It is needless to say that those who are thus contemptuously treated regard the conduct of the Government as adding insult to injury. The consequent ill effects will, I fear, be more lasting and far-reaching than is generally supposed.

A few remarks may not be out of place on the cognate subject of the Irish magistracy. Of the resident or stipendiary magistrates there is nothing to be said, and I believe they not only discharge their duties with ability and impartiality, but possess the confidence of the great bulk of the people. But the same can certainly not be said of the ordinary justices of the peace. They are popularly supposed to be influenced by their religious or political convictions, and cases are certainly not of infrequent occurrence which

supply considerable colour for the imputation. Justice, as Bentham observed, should be apparent as well as real, and the former quality is certainly wanting when an unpaid justice happens to decide an issue having a political or religious tinge in accordance with his known political or religious predilections. Questions of this kind rarely arise in England, but are of frequent occurrence in Ireland, and in the recent magisterial inquiries necessitated by the riots in Belfast the conflicts of opinion between the unpaid and resident magistrates on the same state of facts were not only very numerous, but in every instance the unpaid justice arrived at conclusions such as might be expected from a partisan. In the south I was told an amusing story of a gentleman, who sells a commodity of universal consumption, having recently been put on the Commission of the Peace, and finding that he gradually took a great part of the custom from his rivals in the same trade. Other things being equal, the consumers evidently thought it only prudent to purchase from the individual who might possibly be called upon to deal with them in a magisterial capacity.

XIV.

DUBLIN.

IT is not very creditable to the good sense, the honesty, or the patriotism of the leaders of party at the present day to have allowed the expression "coercion," as applied to legislation, to acquire its present invidious signification. Every jurist knows that all legislation for the repression of crime, or which in any degree, however mild, controls personal liberty of action, is coercive, and that to hold such legislation up as a fitting subject of condemnation simply because it is coercive, is to strike at the foundation upon which all social order depends. Of course, no men of ordinary intelligence or education require to be told this, but there are a very great many indeed who require to be reminded of it. In Ireland the expression has possessed for centuries a very sinister signification, because it has been specifically applied to those exceptional statutes by which the English Government from time to time endeavoured to correct the consequences of its own blundering, and the result is, that when exceptional legislation of a repressive character is demanded at the present day, the Irish national susceptibilities are sorely wounded. When in a previous letter I said that "coercive" legislation would be unfavourably received by the bulk of the people, I meant in the sense of its being an intervention on the part of the Legislature of which the Irish alone would be the objects. But the Irish, who

are perhaps freer from ordinary crime than any other people in Europe, would not, I am convinced, object to any laws to which their fellow-subjects in Great Britain would equally be called upon to submit. It is the invidiousness of continually passing laws which exclusively affect Irish liberty which has made every Administration which proposes so-called coercive legislation for Ireland generally unpopular in this country.

It is the most obvious and the most pressing duty of a Government to provide adequate protection for life and liberty, and for the enjoyment of all the rights incidental to civilized society. That duty, I am bound to say, has been left in abeyance in Ireland for upwards of twelve months. I will not recapitulate the evidence supplied in my earlier letters of the general terrorism produced by the National League, and of the completeness by which it has superseded the authority of the Queen's tribunals in Ireland. The victims are not the landlord class, but for the most part poor hard-working men, whose greatest ambition is to earn as much as will suffice to support themselves and their families, and who, living, as many of them do, in secluded places, and unable through this terrorism to count on the support of any neighbours they may have, are at the complete mercy of their foes.

With this state of things, which has no more to do with the land question than with the recent earthquakes, the Government are bound by every dictate of justice and humanity to deal as soon as they address themselves to the duties of legislation. If an Act of Parliament be necessary for the suppression of the National League, such an Act must be passed,

but it should be an imperial and not an Irish statute. The League has its branches in England and Scotland. Scenes that are of frequent occurrence in Ireland are beginning to be repeated in Wales, and the practice of boycotting is not unknown on the English side of St. George's Channel. I think, therefore, that the Act should be imperial, not only to avoid giving it a specially coercive character as regards Ireland, but because I believe the time will not be far distant when it will be required in all its comprehensiveness. In dealing with agrarian or quasi-agrarian crime the great difficulty in this country is to obtain evidence against the offenders, or to secure their conviction by local juries. According to the existing law, both in Ireland and England, a prisoner must be tried in the county where the offence was committed. This law, or any one analogous to it, does not obtain in any of the continental States; it is a relic of a past age which no longer should be regarded as giving any additional security to the subject, and should be repealed by an imperial statute. It is preposterous to pretend that an innocent man is prejudiced by being taken to a different county to be tried, provided that all necessary facilities are afforded by the Crown for the transport of his witnesses. One of the provisions of the recent Crimes Act enabled the Crown to change the *venue* at its pleasure, and there should be no objection to investing the Crown with this power throughout the United Kingdom, and making it perpetual.

One of the mischiefs incidental to special criminal legislation for Ireland is that the Acts must be limited in duration. The effect is bad, because it holds out a

whimsical inducement to law-breakers merely to suspend their operations for a prescribed time. In the case of statutes obviously trenching on the liberty of the subject, such as those suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, or, like Mr. Forster's Suspects Act, empowering the Crown to imprison individuals without bringing them to trial, it is essential that the duration should be limited, because they operate as an abrogation of the Constitution. But Acts for the amendment of the law of criminal procedure, which do not take away what may justly be regarded as constitutional rights, enactments which are intended to bring criminals to justice whilst leaving to the innocent every safeguard which an innocent man would be likely to demand, ought not, in my humble opinion, to be limited in their duration or in their application to any particular portion of a presumably United Kingdom. In England the Acts giving jurisdiction to the Central Criminal Court over offences committed out of the county of Middlesex, and consolidating different counties for the purpose of certain assizes, have already broken through the ancient rule that an offence could only be dealt with in the county where it was committed; so it cannot, with plausibility, be contended that there is any serious interference with constitutional usage in changing the *venue* from one county to another. The introductory provisions of the expired Crimes Act in Ireland enabled judges to try capital felonies without the intervention of juries; and this constituted so serious an abrogation of the rights of the subject that the statute was, of necessity, condemned to be temporary in its operation. The Irish judges protested *en masse* against such legislation as of necessity tend-

ing to expose them, however conscientious in the discharge of their duties, to obloquy; but the then Government, with a contemptuous disregard for Irish susceptibilities, insisted on passing these most objectionable and mischievous provisions. Luckily they were never acted upon, and the Irish judicial bench was enabled, despite the action of the Legislature, to preserve that respect which, whatever professional agitators may say to the contrary, is readily accorded to it by the Irish people. I have received suggestions from persons entitled to speak with authority, that great benefit would flow from reducing offences which are now indictable to that class which is brought within the sphere of summary jurisdiction by resident (that is, stipendiary) magistrates, the punishment of course being reduced to sentences of three or six months' imprisonment with hard labour. In the south-west of Ireland, for example, where outrage is rife, the criminals secure immunity from the fact that even in the presence of the most convincing evidence juries refuse to convict. It is, however, the certainty of punishment, and not its severity, which operates most strongly on the human mind, and there can be little doubt that if "moonlighters" knew that they would have to appear before resident magistrates instead of courts of assize, they would be infinitely less reckless than they are at present. A difficulty might, however, arise of making such a change in the laws unless it was specially confined to Ireland, which, as I have already pointed out, is objectionable. This, however, might be avoided by making the Act imperial in its operation, but rendering it non-effective save in those counties in the United Kingdom in which the Queen,

not the Lord Lieutenant, by Order in Council, might direct that it should be enforced. By this means Ministers would be responsible to Parliament for putting the Act in operation in particular counties, and it is needless to say such a power would only be exercised in those districts where it was deemed imperatively necessary in order to bring criminals to justice.

It is now universally admitted that Lord O'Hagan's Jury Act has worked badly, because it qualified men to act as jurors who have not justified the confidence reposed in them. I am desirous of not being supposed to cast an imputation upon the intelligence or the honesty of these men, but sad experience has proved that from the very necessities of their existence they find it impossible to offer the same resistance to intimidation, direct or indirect, which is shown by men in a higher social position, especially when they live in different districts from those in which the offences are committed which come under their cognizance. The operation of Lord O'Hagan's Act has notoriously brought trial by jury into contempt in Ireland, and in the interests of the Irish people, and more especially, as recent experience has shown, of the most helpless members of the community, I am firmly convinced that this statute should be considerably modified.

Boycotting is an offence which stands at present beyond the pale of the law, but sooner or later, and the sooner the better, it must be brought within it. I cannot speculate on the final perfection to which this practice of depriving the landlord of the right of letting his land, or the farmer of the opportunity of utilizing it, the shopkeeper of the right of selling his

wares, or the labourer of the means of earning his bread, may ultimately extend; but this I know, that if anything approaching the present condition of things in many parts of Ireland existed in England, the English people would sweep away the Government and the Parliament that hesitated to deal with it. Any people, whether Irish or Fijians, have a legitimate ground for discontent and disaffection if they find no honest and vigorous attempt made, by those who are responsible for their government, to secure to them the enjoyment of the commonest rights. It need occasion no surprise that the number of law-breakers should be increasing every day, when the law-abiding are persistently driven to the wall, and can obtain no redress. One would fancy, from the manner in which the Irish question has been dealt with on both sides of the House of Commons during the past fortnight, that Irish tenants were the only sufferers in this country, and that in their exclusive interests laws should be abrogated or commissions of inquiry instituted. I have frankly stated that, owing to the depreciation in the value of produce this year, the tenants are not, in my opinion, able to pay their rents in full. But I have also stated that, save in rare and exceptional cases, landlords have met their tenants on fair terms, and with reasonable concessions the rents have been paid. In fact, the tenants are about the only people in Ireland whose position is truly enviable. Not only is such universal sympathy extended to them that they must be sincerely grateful for being at length enabled to discover—what they never would have found out for themselves—how badly off they are, but they alone enjoy the exceptional privilege of receiving the

protection of both her Majesty's Government and the National League. I would venture to point out that there are thousands and thousands in this country who possess neither the one nor the other.

It is hardly necessary that I should add anything to what I have already written in connection with the settlement of the land question. Matters have now reached a pass that, whatever may be the ulterior results, the greatest facilities should be afforded for the creation of a tenant proprietary. With the maintenance of the Union, with ordinary firmness of government, and with the sense of security which would be thereby afforded, there should be no difficulty in obtaining, in the form of instalments, the return of the capital required for such an operation. But unless those who will advance the money can make up their minds to support a firm and consistent policy, not only will the money be thrown away, but the materials will be supplied for future agitation which, independently of other mischievous consequences, will effect the complete demoralization of the Irish people. A great deal of nonsense is talked about putting an end to the dual ownership in land. Does any sane man suppose that this object will be achieved by the simple conversion of the present race of tenants into landlords? Are these men to be compelled by Act of Parliament to till the land of which they become the purchasers? Are they to be prohibited from letting their farms to any persons who are willing to become their tenants? But if not, how is the landlord question to be eliminated from the sphere of Irish politics? Is it quite consistent with wise or patriotic statesmanship to look only to the present, and to be

indifferent to the legacy bequeathed to our successors only half a century hence? These are questions which it may be politic, but which it is certainly not honest, to evade. The land question, however important it may be, is only used as a blind, and I venture to affirm that none will more persistently oppose its settlement than those who have raised it. The Government—and I am not speaking of any particular Administration—has certain disagreeable facts staring it in the face, and in justice to the people of the three kingdoms, the sooner it recognizes their immense significance the better it will be.

XV.

DUBLIN.

SWIFT remarked that loyalty was a foible of the Irish people, and however inapplicable such an observation might appear to many at the present time, it still contains a great deal of truth. Loyalty may manifest itself in a variety of forms—to a particular individual, to a particular dynasty, or to a particular form of government. The Irish people have been so habitually neglected by their absentee Sovereigns that it is perhaps to be wondered at that what may be termed “personal” loyalty has survived in any form, however faint. But that it does survive, and that very little indeed would suffice to kindle its embers, is evidenced by the ready and warm recognition accorded by the Irish to any personal exhibitions of royal sympathy. The Irish are notoriously sensitive and sympathetic, and when one thinks of what might have been made of them, and for that matter what might easily be made of them still, by simply turning to account the fact that Dublin is nearer to London than Edinburgh, that Ireland is not Iceland, and that the developments of modern science have practically annihilated St. George’s Channel, it is impossible to avoid regretting that it has never occurred to any Government to try some other panacea for Irish discontent besides legislation. Laws are no doubt very good and necessary things in their way, but it is quite possible to have too much of them. It is not, as Mr. Gladstone put it, that the

laws come from Westminster "in a foreign aspect and a foreign garb," that they are distasteful to the Irish people, but because they are made for Ireland as if she were the Ultima Thule of civilization, inhabited by people as yet scarcely reclaimed from barbarism, and demanding exceptional treatment as such. A State makes laws for itself, and in this respect the operation of all legislation is, as the Germans would express it, subjective. But the legislation of the British Parliament for Ireland has, notwithstanding the Union, been always of an objective, and very frequently of an extremely offensive, not to say oppressive, character. It is not because the Union was obtained by corruption and fraud, or that it is, in the language of the ex-Premier, a paper Union, that the Irish are discontented, but because they find that British statesmen have persistently ignored the work on which they prided themselves, and have dealt with Ireland as if her interests were distinct, instead of being inseparable, from those of the United Kingdom. It would be impossible for me to give an idea of the bitterness which the exponents of all shades of opinion in this country whom I have met have manifested when speaking of the British Government; and, indeed, looking to the present condition of things, I am not surprised that loyalty of the third class to which I have just referred—that is to say, to the existing form of government—is at a very low ebb. Ireland, I am told on all sides, is habitually and persistently sacrificed to the party interests and party rivalries of English statesmen. I have seen no evidence of any special hostility or ill-will towards the Tories, even on the part of the Nationalists, for

indeed I may say that the distrust and want of confidence in both the great English parties are apportioned with the most perfect impartiality. There is a sullen despair arising from the deep-seated conviction that the Irish policy of any Administration will be guided in the future as in the past, not by the necessities of the Irish people, but by the exigencies of party in the British House of Commons. Coercion or conciliation depends upon the counting of a number of noses, many of which have never even sniffed the Irish air. When I venture to expostulate and to place British statesmanship on a higher and more unselfish basis I am met by references to the history of the past twelve months. Everything has gone wrong, I am told, during that period. The Tories took office in the summer of last year when they knew they could not attempt to renew the expiring Crimes Act, and risked Ireland for the sake of present power and a possible renewal of the lease at the then impending general election. The lease was not renewed, but meanwhile Ireland suffered, and suffered heavily, by the experiment. Mr. Gladstone succeeded to office, and seeing a prospect of creating a powerful Liberal majority temporarily by the aid of the Irish Nationalists, and ultimately by their exclusion from Westminster, proposed to hand over Ireland to a body of men whom, if he had spent half as many days in that country as he has lived years, he would have known do not command the confidence of one-fifth, much less four-fifths, of the Irish people. It is this mixture of selfishness and ignorance, this alternation of kicks and halfpence, which have estranged a people naturally endowed with very strong instincts of

loyalty, and have made them the easy dupes of men who have discovered that political agitation is about the only paying industry that has been left in Ireland.

I remarked in one of my previous letters that I could not place Ulster loyalty on a much higher footing than that of a fag to his protector at a public school. I have just seen an amusing illustration of the justice of my estimate in a correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Rev. Dr. Kane, Orange Grand Master of Belfast. It appears that in referring to the Royal Irish Constabulary Lord Salisbury had said that they were chiefly instrumental in maintaining "English" rule in Ireland. This was putting on a little too much side, and the fag expostulated. "You have no more right to speak of English rule in Ireland than I should have to speak of Irish rule in England," wrote the indignant Orangeman. "Very sorry indeed to give offence," replied the Premier; "but there is no adjective in the English language to express my meaning." Ye gods! After the lapse of seven centuries the Ministers of the Kings and Queens of Ireland have not discovered an adjective to describe their rule without outraging the feelings of such an ultra-loyalist as an Orange Grand Master.

The Irish people, whatever their failings, are not generally credited with want of shrewdness, and they know very well that they have infinitely more to lose than to gain by separation, either actual or constructive, from England. This is well recognised by the Nationalist leaders, and it is only at the other side of the Atlantic that the metaphor of the "last link" is employed. But every one knows what stands behind; that it was not to settle the land question that

Mr. Parnell took off his coat, and that if self-government were given to Ireland it would really be exercised by men who would use their powers for the purpose of widening the breach between the two countries, instead of cementing the union between them. By the ignorant and unreflecting such a consummation would be hailed with delight as the establishment of Irish nationality, but by those who keep their senses about them, who have anything to lose by the experiment, and who know that Ireland does not possess the necessary resources to enable her to become self-dependent, and that England would never consent to her becoming practically an outlying "State" of the American Republic, the mere possibility of such a contingency is regarded with the keenest alarm. I have already pointed out how the results of the late elections have restored to the ownership of land in Ireland the value of which Mr. Gladstone's promised legislation deprived it, and therefore the primary duty of the Government will be to satisfy the Irish people that the confidence thus manifested in the resolution of England to maintain the existing connection is not misplaced. But, on the other hand, the maintenance of that connection between the two countries does not imply the preservation of the machinery by which it is now secured. If Great Britain and Ireland are to be one, let the unity have a reality which will relieve future Ministers from the necessity of speaking of English rule in Ireland. At present everything is systematically done, apparently with the object of making the Irish feel that they stand outside the confines of the United Kingdom. It is only by the most perverse ingenuity that a Government

could either devise or maintain a system under which a mere change in the balance of parties in the Imperial Parliament should be made the occasion of popular rejoicing or discontent at a pageant especially designed to symbolize "English" rule. The circumstances under which Lord Aberdeen quitted Ireland the other day ought to seal the fate of the Viceroyalty. I do not mean because on this occasion the Queen's representative formed the central figure in a procession from which royal emblems were carefully excluded, and where loyal airs were sedulously avoided by the accompanying bands. There was, to my mind, a stroke of humour about this which gave the proceedings their only redeeming feature. But why, in the name of all that is rational, should an excuse be supplied for dragging the regalia through the mire, and for extinguishing every spark of loyalty in the Irish breast, by making Irishmen feel that loyalty or disloyalty are not only connected with, but absolutely dependent upon, the ever-changing phases of party government? And yet, despite all this, I maintain that Irish loyalty to the Crown still survives.

The only good purposes the Irish Viceroyalty serves are to put a little money in the tills of a certain class of Dublin tradesmen, and to afford to English statesmen the opportunity of trying their strength with the Irish people with their own special weapon—blarney. The first is not worth speaking about, and the second has invariably resulted in the discomfiture of the Viceroys. But when the viceregal blarney fails, language of a sterner kind is employed, and then the Viceroy has to bear personally the odium of the change in the Ministerial policy. This is a matter of but

little consequence, as I suppose it is all in the way of the viceregal business ; but the mischief of it is, the Crown suffers. The Lord Lieutenant is the visible impersonation of the Sovereign, with very many of the attributes, including that of remitting capital punishment and conferring dignities other than those given by patent under the Great Seal of England. The effigy is so complete that before it was converted into a marionette at the end of a telegraph wire, the Irish people confounded it with royalty itself—a mistake all the more natural as they never saw the real thing. But the results, so far as they affect the unification of the two countries, and the common recognition in both of an institution standing outside and beyond the waves of party strife, have been most disastrous. The Irish are made to feel by the viceregal system that they stand in need of a form of government for which there is no counterpart elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and the Crown shares the odium of which its representative is so frequently the object. This was made strikingly manifest by the disrespect shown by the Dublin Corporation and the Nationalists generally to the Prince of Wales when he visited Ireland at the time when Lord Spencer's unpopularity was at its height.

Until the Viceroy, with the bureaucracy which stands behind him at Dublin Castle, disappears, no legislation, however remedial or otherwise calculated to satisfy the wants of the Irish people, will compensate for the estrangment created by this anomalous and "objective" form of rule. Well-meaning persons frequently suggest that the experiment should be made of sending a Royal Prince to reside in Ireland, and it would doubt-

less be fairly successful if the Irish were children or idiots. Even a Prince, however, might pall upon a nation after a few years, and it would then clamour for some new attraction. What the Irish crave for are realities, not *simulacra*, and as they are constantly told that they are as much self-governing as the English, seeing they have a common Parliament with a common Sovereign, it is not very unreasonable that they should desire to see occasionally a little of the one and of the other. It is competent for the Sovereign to convene Parliament in any part of the United Kingdom, and I believe the Minister who has the courage to select College Green as an occasional site for the Legislature would finally settle the Irish question, and put an end to all agitation deserving the name which had for its object the repeal of the Union. No doubt such a proposal would excite a storm of opposition, especially in London, and would be productive of considerable personal inconvenience to numbers of distinguished individuals. But there are a few unpleasant facts which English statesmen must face, and which cannot be got rid of by simply ignoring their existence. The attempt recently made to split up the United Kingdom, though unsuccessful, was very far from being an ignominious failure. That it so nearly attained success furnishes matter for serious reflection. That it will be repeated, and probably at no distant date, is certain. The position of parties in the House of Commons is not such as to inspire confidence, and Demos is always unreliable. Commissions of inquiry are most excellent things, but they are not original, and generally lead to nothing. "Art is long, life is short; the opportunity is brief,

and decision difficult." The opportunity is indeed very brief, and if it is not turned to good account it may never recur. The sands are running out, and no one knows whose hand may turn the glass next time. Legislation by itself will not stave off the peril. Practical concessions must be made to that spirit of nationality, and, I would also add, of loyalty, in Ireland which has been hitherto persistently ignored. If those concessions are made in the direction I have indicated, I am confident that no more will be heard of Irish Home Rule, with what lies behind it—separation and the disruption of the United Kingdom.

